

Review Article

James McMULLEN: *Idealism, Protest, and the Tale of Genji. The Confucianism of Kumazawa Banzan (1619–1691)*, Oxford Oriental Monographs, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999; xxiii + 539 pp. (ISBN 0-19-815251-5).

W. J. Boot, Leiden

McMullen's book has a problem it sets out to solve, namely, what it was that attracted a seventeenth-century samurai of low, rural origins in the pageant of ancient court life that is displayed in *Genji monogatari*. McMullen, however, approaches this problem on so lavish a scale, that his book should be required reading for anyone who is interested in any aspect of the history of Japan in the Edo Period, and perhaps also for those who, though not Japan specialists, are interested in the perennial problem of using literary sources to establish non-literary facts.

McMullen's study is the culmination of a lifelong study of Kumazawa Banzan, which began with his dissertation *Kumazawa Banzan: The life and thought of a seventeenth-century Japanese Confucian* (Cambridge 1969), and progressed through a number of later publications in English and Japanese, of which his *Genji gaiden. The Origins of Kumazawa Banzan's Commentary on the Tale of Genji* (1991), which contains Banzan's original notes on *Genji monogatari*, with notes, translation, and introduction, deserves special mention.

The book is not a mere antiquarian exercise. At one level, it is a passionate attempt to define such values as idealism and humanism and to find them attested in a context completely different from the European one, where they were originally conceived. In other words, McMullen's study poses and tries to answer the question of the universality of the Japanese experience. In this, he follows in the footsteps of Bellah's *Tokugawa Religion* and in those of a good number of Japanese scholars, foremost amongst whom we find Maruyama Masao.

The core section of the book are the chapters on Banzan's involvement with *Genji monogatari* (Pt. IV). McMullen leads up to this with Parts I–III. Part I, called “The Landscape of the Age,” is a general introduction in which he discusses the *status quaestionis* and his own methodology, and gives synopses of the history of Confucianism from the Period of the Warring States up till and including Wang Yang-ming, of Japanese society from the late Sengoku till the early Edo Period, of the religious situation in Japan, of court culture and *Genji monogatari*, of earlier Neo-Confucian interpretations of the *Book of Odes* (*Shih ching*), and of the intellectual world of early Tokugawa Japan. In Part II, “A Warrior's Life,” McMullen treats Banzan's career in the service of Ikeda Mitsumasa, *daimyô* of Okayama (Bizen), and the life of semi-exile that followed, to the extent that Banzan was still concerned with what happened in Bizen. In Part III, “A View of the World,” McMullen deals with Banzan's writings and intellectual development after he has retired from active service with Mitsumasa in 1657 – the years which he spent in Kyoto, Akashi, and Yata. The final section (Part V), “Questions on the Great Learning,” is concerned with Banzan's *Daigaku wakumon* and the motives he had for writing this work which so displeased the authorities that he had to spend his final years under house arrest in Koga.

McMullen does a fine job, interweaving a biographical account of Banzan's life with an intellectual-historical account of the development of his thought. In McMullen's hands, Banzan no longer is an “eclectic thinker” with doubtful intellectual credentials and of uncertain affiliation who addressed sundry topics, but a person whose life, activities, reading, and thinking mutually influenced each other and form a coherent whole. “I seek a unity all-pervading” (*Lun-yü* XV.2) is the first sentence of the book, and in this case the basic methodological statement.

McMullen does give a short account, *style bibliographie raisonnée*, of Banzan's major works (pp. 174–180), but only two books by Banzan are discussed at any length and systematically, namely *Genji gaiden* and *Daigaku wakumon*. All his other works, such as the voluminous *Shûgi Washo* and *Shûgi gaisho*, such dialogues as *Miwa monogatari*, or his commentaries on various Classics, are liberally quoted – indeed, McMullen's command of the *Kumazawa Banzan zenshû* is impressive – but they are not treated as such.

The heart of the book is Part IV, which deals with *Genji monogatari*. As McMullen points out, Banzan's commentary has been in bad repute ever since Motoori Norinaga wrote that Banzan “extract[s] locutions serially from the books of the novel and, disregarding the meaning of the text, [makes]

Confucian pronouncements in accordance with [his own] fancy.” (p. 400) On the whole, this verdict has sufficed to shy off any *kokubungakusha* who might have had an incipient interest in *Genji gaiden*, with the notable exception of Noguchi Takehiko, while specialists in Confucian studies never bothered to take an interest in the text because it was labelled a commentary on a work of Japanese literature. McMullen, however, more than makes up for these omissions. He has restored *Genji gaiden* to its rightful place as an important document in the history of Japanese thought.

Actually, in his choice of *Genji monogatari*, Banzan was in tune with his Confucian colleagues. All Confucian scholars and Sinologists of the Edo Period agreed that the apogee of Japanese culture had been reached under the emperors Uda, Daigo, and Murakami. During their reigns, the emperor ruled, culture flourished, and “The Way” was practised in Japan. Banzan locates the action of the novel in exactly this same period (p. 333). The point where Banzan differed from his colleagues was, that he saw The Way depicted in a novel, where his colleagues tended to support their conviction with references to the Court Academy, examinations, and Sugawara no Michizane’s Chinese poetry.

From a Confucian point of view, there were several things wrong with *Genji monogatari*: it was a work of fiction, not of fact; it contained lewd stories of sexual intercourse, illicit affairs, and adultery; and it was written by a woman, who by this very fact had never taken part in the weighty affairs of state. Banzan’s choice of *Genji monogatari* entailed that he had to find satisfactory solutions for these problems. He had, for reasons we will come to in a moment, fallen in love with the novel, but in order to justify this emotional response, he had to make a case.

McMullen carefully analyses the strategies Banzan deploys to meet the objections listed above. The first stratagem was, that Banzan decided to treat *Genji monogatari* as if it were a factual record. This involved him in a lot of tortuous argument. Thus, we find him visiting spots “where Genji had been” in Suma when he himself was living in the same place, now called Akashi, in semi-banishment, and collecting local traditions: “The young cherry trees that he [= Genji] planted survive too, their seed never having died out. Had he never existed, neither would these traditions.” (pp. 299–300). He also condemns attempts to explain certain features of *Genji monogatari* as literary figures showing the novelist’s art, even where such explanations were part of the commentatorial tradition (pp. 310–311). Banzan was astute enough not to join the fruitless search of medieval commentators for historical figures who had provided the model for Genji (p. 312), but he did go as far as agreeing

with the opinion of Sanjônishi Kin'eda that “[the *Genji*'s] factuality was in the style of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Shih chi*” (p. 315).

Banzan also introduced the Chinese concept of *yü-yen* (J. *gugen*), interpreting the story as essentially true but foisted on fictive characters (*roman à clef* [pp. 312–313]), and even took the step of defining “essentially true” as “morally true”: “Even if Lady Akashi did not exist, there is no inherent impossibility in the existence of a worthy woman such as she. Thus there is benefit to be derived from imagining her to exist and treating her as a copy book for other women.” (pp. 315–316)

As regards the larger problem of using literary works as a source of factual information, it is interesting to see that Banzan asked the right question: “The *Genji* is a fictitious tale based on amorousness, so how can it be quoted as evidence for the zither?” (p. 309) He did not, however, pursue the matter to the end, but settled for the easier, and more congenial assumption that at some level of factuality the text was a true and factual account.

The next criticism Banzan had to meet, was that *Genji monogatari* was an erotic tale, filled with love affairs. Most of Banzan's Confucian contemporaries, amongst whom we find Hayashi Razan, Yamazaki Ansai and his disciples, Muro Kyûsô, Kaibara Ekiken, and Yamaga Sokô, put it into the same category as *Ise monogatari* and maintained that *Genji monogatari* was corruptive and devoid of any “serious moral purpose.” (pp. 59-60). Banzan could not deny the facts, but he did find ways to counter the conclusions. On the one hand, he claimed that there were good reasons why Murasaki had included all these love affairs. Her real intent was to write “a record of ancient rites, music, and customs,” but if she had done just that, nobody would have bothered to read her work, and it might have been lost (p. 320). The love interest was a ruse on the part of Murasaki Shikibu. In a metaphor derived from *Chuang-tzu*, Banzan calls it a “fishing line” (p. 320) or a “fishing bait” (p. 318, 323, 390), though the word actually employed in *Chuang-tzu* is *ch'üan* (Morohashi, *Dai Kan Wa jiten* VIII: 25995) – neither “line” nor “bait,” but a bamboo contraption used for catching fishes, that one throws away after the fish has been caught. The image may be completely different, but we have here another instance of the well-known ploy of *miscere utile dulci*.

This explanatory theory also proved expedient in order to exculpate Genji from his most terrible moral offense, i.e., his affair with his father's consort Fujitsubo. This was so grossly improbable an affair, Banzan maintained, that any well-intentioned reader should grasp immediately that this could not be true, and hence, not central to what the author intended to convey (p. 321). And readers who were not only well-intentioned, but also well-read, would

have spotted, moreover, with help of earlier commentaries, that the story was in essence the Chinese story, told in *Shih chi*, of Lü Pu-wei who fathered the first Chinese emperor, Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, on the King of Ch'in (p. 314). The stories are still there, of course, but they have been rendered innocuous. The reader is free to ignore them as inessential, and to concentrate on higher things.

On the other hand, Banzan also developed a contrary strategy, which claimed that the amorous stories *were* essential, in that they gave insight into human feelings, and especially into the most intense of all human feelings, sexual love. Such insight he regarded as a necessary prerequisite for any ruler, including lowly administrators like Banzan himself and his fellow-samurai. The interpretative strategy Banzan employs here was derived from the ancient Chinese lore which surrounds the *Book of Odes*. This lore, in short, maintains, that the songs, and especially the songs of the various countries (*kuo-feng*), were collected and presented to the king of Chou in order to let him know the feelings of the people. Some of the more straightly laced Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Chu Hsi had a problem with this explanation, because a number of the Odes, defined as the “debauched odes” or the “Odes of [the States] Cheng and Wei,” were a bit over the edge. Banzan, however, taking comfort from the thought that Confucius himself had included them into his final selection of the odes, maintained that “For the superior man, the [debauched] songs of Cheng and Wei are more to be treasured than the [correct] ‘*Hsiao ya*’ and ‘*Ta ya*’” (p. 322). Of course, Banzan did not *approve* of the illicit love affairs which form the substance of these odes, but in the context of his commentary he uses them as a justification for *Genji monogatari* itself: “It is my belief that the prevailing opinion held by scholars of the *Tale of Genji* as a licentious, corrupting, and dirty book stems from their failure to arrive at the inner significance of the Odes as a means for understanding the correctness and incorrectness of human attitudes” (pp. 322–323).

Apart from these two strategies, which McMullen calls intentionalist (p. 323), Banzan also gave a “historicist” explanation of the question why the stories were there: in view of the time and place in which the tale is set, the topic of “love” could not have been avoided. It was part of the landscape (p. 324). In an interesting development of this idea, Banzan goes on to argue that in ancient times, when the Japanese were still martial and warlike, love (and love poetry) were beneficial because they soothed “the fierce heart of the warrior”; it was “the ‘Way’ for governing the state” (p. 325). Later on, however, “From the time of Genji and the others, [love poetry] gradually began to lose its harmonizing function and began to cause harm” (p. 325).

The third reproach Banzan had to deal with, was that the novel had been written by a woman. This was a definite minus. When Hayashi Razan decided to write a commentary on a work of classical Japanese literature, he chose *Tsurezuregusa*, because, as he explained in his preface, it was one of the few works around written by a man. Banzan was almost as bad. In the preface of *Genji gaiden* he writes that “Murasaki Shikibu’s father, Tametoki, was a man of erudition and talent, and had written a draft intended as a sequel to the national histories [i.e. the *Rikkokushi*, which stop in 887. W.J.B.], and it is said that Shikibu took this and wrote it up as this novel” (p. 315). “Said,” by whom? McMullen introduces this quotation with the words “he adduced the theory,” but does not state from where Banzan got it.

The overall impression is that Banzan, since he had decided to like the novel, more or less ignored the fact that its author was a woman. Although McMullen remarks that “Banzan was almost certainly more constructive towards the women in his circle than his prescriptive writings would suggest” (p. 373), what emerges from the pages McMullen devotes to the topics of “Women” and “Marriage” (pp. 363–373) in connection with *Genji monogatari* is much of a muchness. McMullen may claim that “Banzan’s views on women are far more liberal and compassionate” than those expressed in *Onna daigaku* (p. 372), and that Banzan may have “noted with satisfaction that ‘wives, daughters, or sisters of my fellow-aspirant friends’ had been inspired by his *Precepts for Women (Joshi kun)* to read the *Classic of Filial Piety* and *Four Books*” (p. 373), but what Banzan did not do was write a few words in praise of the woman who wrote the novel he loved so much. His praise is reserved for the novel’s characters, especially for Genji himself.

The necessity to deploy these various stratagems Banzan had brought upon himself, by his decision to study and propagate the novel. He was obviously infatuated with *Genji monogatari*. Why? In a short text, *Soku Sensei dôdan*, addressed to his collaborator Nakanoin Michishige, which according to McMullen probably dates from before 1673, he writes “... some time ago I derived exceptional benefits from reading the *Tale of Genji*. ... Perhaps because it is in *kana* and concerns Japan, I derived exceptional benefit in acquiring knowledge of human feelings, more than from the Cheng and Wei poems [in the *Book of Odes*]” (p. 300). The year 1672 or 1673 was also the time when Michishige began writing his commentary on *Genji monogatari*, titled *Genji kiki-gaki*, and sending it section by section to Banzan for his comments. Banzan’s comments on Michishige’s commentary in turn became the basis of his own *Genji gaiden*. Their cooperation endured for five years or more, and lasted until our commentators had reached the chapter “Fuji no uraba.”

A “secret Genji commentary” by Banzan is mentioned for the first time in a letter that dates from sometime between 1680 and 1683 (pp. 305–306). In other words, *Genji gaiden* is the fruit of approximately ten years of *Genji* study, under the guidance of a court noble who was not only a good friend, but who also belonged to a family that had a tradition of *Genji* scholarship (pp. 291–295).

“Knowledge of human feelings,” however, was only one of the things which Banzan appreciated in the novel. Basically, the novel had opened his eyes to an alternative for his own society which had once actually existed in Japan. A society which was more cultured, yet more frugal; which lived in harmony with the natural environment, instead of being about to destroy it; which was ruled by ritual rather than by law, and still practised the ancient rites and music; which set store by education (p. 333). McMullen takes up these various points both systematically (pp. 332–373) and through a discussion of Banzan’s appreciation of the characters of the novel (pp. 374–399).

The conclusion McMullen reaches at the end of the chapters dealing with *Genji monogatari* is, that “The ideal that Banzan abstracted from the novel represented an inversion of his perception of his own militarized, authoritarian, and unbenevolent society. *His advocacy of the novel was an act of protest*” (p. 406).

As is already announced in the title of his book, “protest” and its concomitant concepts “idealism” and “humanism” are extremely important to McMullen. The fact that he attaches so much importance to these concepts and uses them throughout as his preferred analytical tools, situates his book in a polemical context. This context is, briefly, whether the Confucianism of the Edo Period was *goyô gakumon*, the obsequious servant of the military regime of the *bakufu*, or opposed it, and secondly, whether it should be regarded as a purely Japanese phenomenon, or exemplifies universal historical tendencies. Basing himself on his case study of Banzan, McMullen takes clear positions in both these issues.

“Protest,” as McMullen defines the concept, implies a tension with present reality, and the ability to distance oneself from one’s own society. In order to be able to protest, one must have some sort of alternative in mind, an ideal which one deems viable, and preferable to what is being done in actual fact. In order to protest, one must also have a fairly strong and independently minded personality, be an “autonomous subject,” as McMullen phrases it. Finally, for protest to be more than a quixotic and inconsequential act of heroism, one must be able to formulate one’s protest as a reasoned argument,

referring to values and precedents. The set of values Banzan adhered to, McMullen defines as “humanist.” “Humanism is ... anthropocentric in its assumptions, ... implies the dignity and the basic equality of human beings as ends in themselves, ... In sociological terms, [it] favours achievement rather than ascription, universalism rather than particularism. Politically, humanism prefers meritocracy to the exercise of power on the basis of hereditary status” (pp. 11–14).

In these terms, Confucianism, including the Confucianism of Tokugawa Japan, is a humanism; no doubt about it. This made Confucianism an awkward tool for the *bakufu* to use, and a potentially dangerous tool, at that. The *bakufu*, as a military organisation, definitely did believe in using people as tools, and from top to bottom, the *bakufu* was based on ascription; it was aristocratic to the core, and birth decided. Hence, from the beginning of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, most Confucians dissented and quite a few protested. It is only a few pages, but in these, McMullen takes this discussion back to ancient China, where he points out the arising opposition between a body of military-Legalist and a body of civil, Confucian doctrine (pp. 14–21). Fortunately for the Far-East, on the whole the latter won out, but both options remained on the books – quite literally so. The core curriculum may have consisted of the Confucian Classics, but the military classics and Legalist writings, too, were available, studied, commented upon, and printed, also in Tokugawa Japan, and scholars were aware of the differences and incompatibilities of these two streams in their intellectual heritage. If someone should want to protest, he did not have far to go to find appropriate ammunition. It was lying there in the form of nearly two millennia of articulate polemics. The interesting thing about Banzan is, that he was not satisfied with this, but brought a new, Japanese source into the fray, *Genji monogatari*.

McMullen himself is somewhat diffident about introducing the word “protest” in this context, apparently because he fears that it might be seen as the intrusion of a European concept, which was not “available to early Tokugawa Japanese” (p. 11). He also enters upon a lengthy discussion of “individuality” (pp. 21–30), in the course of which he opposes “the Confucian concept of individuality [which] was rather weak” to the “radical autonomy” which the individual has been able to achieve in the West (p. 28). Since, in the end, Kumazawa Banzan *did* protest and does not give the impression of being unduly hampered by a weak concept of individuality (“arrogant from a youth up,” was how his *daimyô* Mitsumasa described him [p. 72]), in the context of the book the point is not really relevant.

The same applies to the discussion about “protest.” Perhaps the word “protest” did not exist, but call the phenomenon to which McMullen refers “remonstrance,” and throughout East Asia, in all phases of its history, brave remonstrators can be found. One of the words commonly used to translate “protest” is *kôgi*. Look it up in the dictionary, and one soon finds the following quotation, dating from a Han Dynasty source: “Remonstrance begins with compliant words; in its second stage one engages in counter argument (*kôgi*), and in the final stage, one dies for one’s principles” (*Chung ching*, quoted in Morohashi V: 11889-11). Remonstrance was considered as essential for the well-being of the state. Its servants must point out what was wrong, were it the behaviour of the emperor himself, and if it cost them their lives, their praise was sung by later generations. Mitsumasa himself reminds his vassals of this obligation (p. 109; cf. also p. 146). When Banzan was remonstrating with his *daimyô* in Okayama (Ch. 3 is titled “Remonstrations,” and elsewhere McMullen speaks of Banzan’s “brave Confucian remonstrations” [p. 156]), or when he wrote his *Daigaku wakumon*, he was doing his duty, and he had a tradition in which he stood. There is no reason not to call his actions protest.

In other words, we may conclude with McMullen that protest could exist, was part of the Confucian heritage, actually did occur in the case of Banzan, and that as a consequence, he has succeeded in what he calls “the main aim” of his book, i.e., “to establish the presence in early Tokugawa history of idealism and protest, phenomena whose occurrence there is not usually argued” (p. 14). The meta-discussion in which he embeds his argument, is important in its own right, but not very relevant to his case or his subject.

The same applies to the other meta-discussion McMullen takes up, which is the *nihonjinron* problem of Japan’s uniqueness. In other words, is it possible to describe Banzan’s thought and actions as instances of universal historical tendencies. The most interesting aspect of this question is, whether Banzan saw himself in this light.

As McMullen makes abundantly clear, Banzan’s own answer would have been “yes.” The world he knew was narrow, confined as it was to East-Asia, but Banzan leaves no doubt that he considered Japan as an integral part of that world, and that the rules that applied elsewhere also applied in Japan. Banzan was fully familiar with this world. From the ancient Chinese Sages, court aristocrats and *bakufu* dignitaries to the lowly farmers in Bizen and Ômi – he knew them all, and consciously located his actions and ideas in this broad perspective. In the well-known argument about Japan versus China, which all Japanese intellectuals of the Edo Period felt they had to tackle, he

came down squarely on the universalistic side: China is the centre, and there are no fundamental differences between China and Japan. “China is the teacher land within the four seas. Her contribution to Japan is especially great. The paths of rites and music; ... right down to crafts and technical skills; not one of them has not reached us and been learnt from China” (p. 205). He developed two lines of argument to explain how this situation could have come about. One is an ingenious argument, partly ontological and partly geographical, and hinges on the fact that, though Japan is not in the centre but “inclines towards the east, because she is mid-way between north and south, the material force of the four seasons is in general equal to that of China. ... [The Japanese people], like those of China, receive human Nature completely, and their bright virtue is illumined” (p. 206). The other argument is historical, and is based on the legend of T’ai-po, scion of the future royal house of Chou, who came to Japan and “taught the morality of human relationships, rituals, ancestor worship, and marriage” (p. 208) – in short, did for Japan what the ancient Sages did for China. For this reason, the people came to revere him as a god and “called him the Supreme God who Shines in the Sky” (p. 209). In so many words, Banzan identifies T’ai-po with Amaterasu, and regards the imperial house as being of Chinese descent. And not only the imperial house; the samurai class, too, descended from T’ai-po or from other Chinese immigrants, which explains why they are one cut above those Japanese of autochthonous ancestry (pp. 210–212). One of the reasons why Banzan was so much taken in by the imperial court as portrayed in *Genji monogatari* was also, that he saw it as the last repository of the ancient Chinese ritual and cultural order, adapted to Japanese circumstances (pp. 352–353).

Although Banzan did believe in a special place for the samurai, he did not close his eyes to the needs of the people. He comments favourably on passages in *Genji monogatari* where Genji deigns to take cognizance of lesser mortals (pp. 347–350; 395–396). The years he had spent in the countryside in Ômi during his youth (pp. 74–79), and his experiences as an administrator in Bizen (pp. 104–108) had given him ample opportunity to acquaint himself first-hand with the living conditions of the peasantry. “They, too, are men,” he writes, in the context of a description of the iniquities of tax collection, and he comments angrily on the fact that someone who tries to do something for the peasants – as he did in Bizen, after the disastrous flood of 1654 – is reviled by his fellow-samurai as being “too compassionate to the people” (pp. 251–252).

Banzan maintained that “Since Chinese, Japanese, and the barbarians of West, South, North and East are all people born with Heaven and Earth as

their father and mother, they are all brothers” (p. 186; cf. pp. 192–193, p. 212). Originally, men had lived together as brothers, in an egalitarian society (p. 190). When social hierarchies arose, they did so because one or other individual possessed moral virtue or expert knowledge, or was born with a better kind of material force (pp. 192–194). The realm belonged to the realm (*tenka wa tenka no tenka nari*), not to its ruler as his private possession. Hierarchies were justified only if those above fulfilled their obligations towards the people, whose “well-being remained the ultimate principle” (pp. 194–195). These ideas may seem extreme for a Japanese Confucian living in the seventeenth century. On the other hand, they were all part of the Confucian tradition.

That Banzan was not overly inhibited by bounds of caste and country, and thought on a larger scale than Japan alone, is also evident from his discourse on the *Great Learning*. *Daigaku wakumon* was prompted by his fear of a Manchu invasion. This fear turned out to be groundless, but Banzan’s argument, based as it was on Japan’s earlier experiences with the Mongols, was not unfounded. In the same way as the Mongols had tried to invade Japan a few years after they had succeeded in conquering the whole of China, the Manchu, who had conquered Taiwan in 1662 and had finally occupied Southern China in 1681, might well try to do the same. He was strengthened in this apprehension by certain ideas he had about periodicity in history. Every five hundred years, great upheavals would occur (p. 191), and around 1686 such a five hundredth year was close at hand (pp. 414–415).

As he began writing *Daigaku wakumon*, Banzan apparently decided “to throw it all out.” He did not only ring the alarm in regard to the Manchu, preach military preparedness, and reprimand those in power, including Shogun Tsunayoshi, for their moral short-comings, but followed this up with a wealth of suggestions for political and social improvement: opening the channels of communication and appointing people of talent (pp. 422–424); relieving poverty and eliminating wastage (pp. 424–427); improving the environment (pp. 427–429); emptying the cities and returning the samurai to the land (pp. 429–431); instituting rites, music, and education (pp. 431–435); and sending down courtiers from Kyoto to live in the country and to civilize the inhabitants of the fiefs through their teaching and example (pp. 435–438). This is as far as McMullen excerpts the text, but it contains more, such as a plea for doing away with the quota for foreign trade and reopening the port of Hirado (Section 14; *Nihon shisô taikai* 30: *Kumazawa Banzan*, pp. 444–445), and proposals to abolish both the ban on Christianity (with the argument that it was not forbidden in China) and the *terauke* system, which only served to enrich the Buddhist establishment (Sections 15 and 16; *ibid.*, pp. 445–446).

At the time, the *bakufu* may have considered Banzan's suggestions to be out of place and reacted accordingly, but nearly a century after Banzan's death, in the fourth month of Tenmei 8 (1788), *Daigaku wakumon* was printed (of all places, in Akashi), and as far as we know, nothing untoward happened to the publisher.

There is no doubt that within the limits of his own world, Banzan was a universalistic and even cosmopolitan thinker, and was not inclined to make Japan into a special case. If one does not believe in grand schemes of universal historical development, and fortunately McMullen does not, this is about as far as one can go. The only remaining step one can take is to see whether one can find parallels for Banzan in Europe, in order to bring him "closer to home." In his final chapters, "A Wider View" and "Kumazawa Banzan in History," McMullen attempts to do as much, and trots out two English patron saints, John Locke (pp. 469–471) and William Cobbett (pp. 472–481). For someone who has not been raised on *Rural Rides*, the result is less than enlightening. If one is casting about for parallels, why not take Montaigne? There we have another country squire with some administrative experience, who also wrote in a loose and prolix style about any number of topics, and he has the same habit Banzan has, of intermingling quotations from the classics with his personal experiences and things people told him. The question is, what these "distant parallels" (p. 469) ultimately teach us.

In the above, I have hardly done justice to this immensely rich book. I have glossed over Part II, which is in itself a fascinating case study of the problems a *daimyô* faced when he decided to push through a reform programme in his fief. The definition of the aim of the reform, the ideological and political constraints that shape the formulation of the programme, the interference by *bakufu* officials, the practical problem of obtaining cooperation within the fief, which hinges on the choice between employing *homines novi* or using the established vassals (*fudai*) to execute the reforms – all the usual topics come up, through the highly articulate and detailed personal records of the two central figures, Ikeda Mitsumasa and Banzan.

Another thing I have omitted is McMullen's contributions to straightforward intellectual history. Of great interest in this connection, apart from his exploration of Banzan's ideas in Part III, is his treatment of Banzan's study under Nakae Tôju (pp. 79–85) and of his attempts to further Tôju's brand of Neo-Confucianism, *Shingaku*, once he was himself securely established in Okayama (pp. 99–102). He not only preached the doctrine to his *daimyô*, but also founded a school and a *Shingaku* chapter in Okayama, called Hanabata *Kyôjô*,

where “every morning and evening like-minded friends ... practised the arts, expounded learning, and were frugal and warm [towards each other]” (p. 100). After a few years, however, *Shingaku* came under a cloud. Hayashi Razan hinted darkly at links between *Shingaku*, Christianity, and the plot of Yui Shōsetsu (pp. 117–118). High officials of the *bakufu* warned Mitsumasa against “the assembly of large numbers for the purpose of Confucian Studies” (p. 118). Under such pressure, both Mitsumasa and Banzan eventually found it wiser to dissociate themselves both from the followers of *Shingaku* and from its central ideas (pp. 121–122). It is an intriguing chapter in the history of Confucianism in the early Edo Period.

Finally, I could have paid more attention to the environmental issue, about which Banzan held attractive and definite ideas (see especially pp. 239–245). I decided not to do so, first, because a review can only be so long, and second, because I felt that in doing so I would detract attention from what I consider the two major achievements of McMullen’s book. The first of these is, that McMullen has succeeded in drawing an integrated portrait of Banzan as a man and Banzan as a thinker. The second is, that McMullen, through his restoration of the text and through his meticulous analysis of the contents of *Genji gaiden*, has succeeded in validating it as a cardinal clue to Banzan’s thought and personality, and as a major document in the history of thought of the Edo Period.

