

Review: John Allen TUCKER: *Itô Jinsai's Gomô jigi and the Philosophical Definition of Early Modern Japan* (Brill's Japanese Studies Library. Edited by H[arold] Bolitho and K.W. Radtke, vol.7), Leiden et al.: Brill 1998, xiv + 282p., including one illustration, bibliographical references, and index (ISSN 0925-6512, ISBN 90 04 10992 7).

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Itô Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705) numbers among those Edo-period Confucian scholars who have attracted considerable attention in Japan as well as among non-Japanese researchers. Yet, for all his importance there had not been an extensive translation from his works.¹ This situation now has been remedied by the publication of John A. Tucker's complete translation of the *Philosophical Lexicography of the Analects and Mencius* 語孟字義 (*Gomô jigi*)², one of Jinsai's major works.

1. Introduction

In his dissertational thesis Tucker had traced the influence of Chen Beixi's 陳北溪 (1159–1223) *The Meaning of Confucian Terms* 性理字義 (*Xingli ziyi*) on Japanese Confucian scholars in the first half of the Edo-period.³ He “ended

1 For partial translations cf. SPAE, Joseph John: *Itô Jinsai. A Philosopher, Educator, and Sinologist of the Tokugawa Period*, Monumenta Serica Monograph 12, Peiping: The Catholic University of Peking 1948; LEINSS, Gerhard: *Japanische Anthropologie. Die Natur des Menschen in der konfuzianischen Neoklassik am Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts. Jinsai und Sorai* (Izumi, vol. 2), Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag 1995.

2 Hereafter referred to as GJ. Number of pages given in round brackets.

3 The ninth chapter, “Jinsai's Gomô jigi,” had dealt with Jinsai's “conceptual repertory.” John Allen TUCKER: *Pei-hsi's Tzu-i and the Rise of Tokugawa Philosophical Lexicography*, University of Michigan 1990 (PhD thesis): 245–80. Cf. also by the same author “Chen Peixi, Lu Xiangshan, and Early Tokugawa (1600–1867) Philosophical Lexicography,” *Philosophy East & West* 43.4 (1993): 683–713. Another article dealing with some aspects of Jinsai's thought appeared as “Ghosts and Spirits in Tokugawa Japan. The Confucian Views of Itô Jinsai,” *Japanese Religions* 21.2 (1996): 229–51.

up tracing the emergence of a hitherto unnoticed Tokugawa genre, that of philosophical lexicography, born shortly after the arrival of Beixi's *Ziyi* in Japan in the late-sixteenth century⁴ with a "textual and philosophical connection" between the original by Beixi and the Japanese works modeled after it.⁵ (ix) This observation has strong repercussions on Tucker's assessment of Jinsai's philosophy in the book under review here.

The "Introduction" attempts nothing less than a reevaluation of Jinsai's thought as such: "In seventeenth-century intellectual history, Itô Jinsai stands out as the Confucian scholar who articulated, most subtly and systematically, a socio-political vision primarily reflecting assumptions, ethical concerns, and material interests most characteristic of *chônin*, or that hereditary estate including merchants, artisans, and townspeople generally." (1) Whereas Jinsai commonly is known for his professed return to ancient Confucian ideas as expressed in the *Confucian Analects* 論語 (*Lunyu*) and the *Mencius* 孟子 (*Mengzi*) and his attack on the metaphysically tinged reformulation of Confucianism by scholars of Song-dynasty China like Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), Tucker sets Jinsai in his historical background stressing his intimate relationship with one social stratum, that of artisans and merchants, as opposed to that of

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- 4 The works that Tucker mentions as written under the influence of the *Ziyi* — Fujiwara Seika's 藤原惶窩 (1561–1619) *Human Nature and Principle explained in Japanese* 仮名性理 (*Kana seiri*), Hayashi Razan's 林羅山 (1583–1657) *Vernacular Explanation of [Beixi's] Meaning of Human Nature and Principle* 性理字義諺海 (*Seiri jigi genkai*), Matsunaga Sekigo's 松永尺五 (1592–1657) *Ethics Primer* 彝倫抄 (*Irin shô*), Yamaga Sokô's 山鹿素行 (1622–85) *Compendium of Sagely Teachings* 聖教要録 (*Seikyô yôroku*), GJ, Ogyû Sorai's 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) *Discerning Names* 弁名 (*Benmei*) and others — have been known to and commented upon by scholars for a long time. Tucker's achievement lies in drawing attention to similarities between them and the *Ziyi* — although they considerably differ in length and number of key concepts discussed — as well as grouping them together as examples of an independent genre which he calls "philosophical lexicography."
- 5 Tucker concedes that the connection between *Ziyi* and GJ "was somewhat familiar to at least several Japanese scholars." He does not give the names of these scholars here and only mentions SHIMIZU later on. (23–24) SHIMIZU Shigeru: "Kaidai" 解題 (Bibliographical notes), YOSHIKAWA, SHIMIZU 1971: 622–31. The use of "somewhat" makes Tucker's claim an understatement. KOYASU Nobukuni 子安宣邦 stressed the links between both texts and characterized Jinsai's choice of words and way of modelling his arguments on the *Ziyi* as "parodizing" Beixi's text. KOYASU Nobukuni: *Itô Jinsai. Jinrin teki sekai no shisô* 伊藤仁齋. 人倫的世界の思想 (Itô Jinsai. Thought of a world of human ethics), Tôkyô Daigaku Shuppan Kai 1982: 55. Already KAIZUKA Shigeki 貝塚茂樹 noticed that the GJ not only had taken the *Ziyi* as a model for its structure, but as a "departing point" in its philosophical contents. KAIZUKA Shigeki: "Nihon jukyô no sôshi sha" 日本儒教の創始者 (The founder of Japanese Confucianism): *Itô Jinsai* 伊藤仁齋 (Nihon no meichô, vol. 13), Chûô Kôron Sha 1972: 17–18, 22.

samurai. Jinsai's thought appears as an "implicit critique" of "various attempts by samurai theorists to redefine Neo-Confucianism along lines which both flattered, socially and politically, and further empowered, at least intellectually, the warrior estate."⁶ (1) Tucker considers his teachings to have been "politically potent" as they – "implicitly" – "provided a socially legitimizing, uplifting ethic for townspeople and other non-samurai by affirming their full ethical parity with all people, especially samurai who claimed to be their superiors."⁷ (3) The "challenging socio-political edge" (3), that laid beneath the "lexicographic surface" of Jinsai's writings, was "seriously at odds" with the assumptions of the ruling warrior estate.⁸ (3) Underpinning this interpretation of the political dimensions of Jinsai's thought is a view of Edo-period society in which a "bakufu-decreed social system relegated *chônin* to the bottom of society."⁹ (59)

A second major theme which is closely welded together with the first to form a coherent reading of Jinsai's life-work in Tucker's account is the reevaluation of Jinsai's place in the Edo-period history of thought with respect to Song-Confucian learning. The delineation of distinct, even antagonistic schools of thought in Edo-period Confucianism has its roots among Edo-period Confucian scholars.¹⁰ Inoue Tetsujirô's 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944) work did much to put the classification of schools on an academic basis.¹¹ Since then this taxonomy has kept its place in the historiography of thought with Jinsai

6 In places Tucker exerts some caution in expressing his views. He concedes that Jinsai's interpretation was "not specifically *chônin* in outlook," but neither "hardly exclusive to samurai." (1)

7 Parts of a "significant alternative worldview" (1) that appealed – "albeit tacitly" – to "most intellectually informed *chônin*" (1) were Jinsai's notions "about the material vitality of things, his insistence on the natural integrity of human feelings and desires, his recognition of the universal ethical importance of self-cultivation, and his admission of a circumscribed realm of spiritual engagement." (1)

8 Jinsai privileged the "welfare and wishes of 'the people'." (3, 7)

9 Contrary to Tucker's claim there was no government decree that made the division of society into status groups mandatory, nor did authorities prescribe that "merchants" should be considered the lowest of these groups deserving least in respect. If in reality there was a marked differentiation of social or rather occupational groups this was due to developments that had already started during the period of internal strife in the 15th and 16th centuries.

10 Cf. Hirose Tansô's 広瀬淡窓 (1782–1856) *Evaluation of the Grove of Confucian Scholars* 儒林評 (*Jurin hyô*) (Nihon jurin sôsho 日本儒林叢書, vol. 3), Ôtori Shuppan Sha 1971 (reprint 1889).

11 INOUE Tetsujirô: *Nihon kogaku ha no tetsugaku* 日本古学派の哲学 (The Philosophy of the Japanese School of Ancient Learning), Fuzan Bô 1902.

as a member of the School of Ancient Learning 古学 (*Kogaku*), that advocated a direct study of the earliest scriptures of the Confucian tradition and criticized the mitigating influence of Song-learning.

Tucker holds that Jinsai's attack on Song Confucianism is motivated by his merchant background: it is not so much an attack on the work of Song-dynasty scholars as such but rather on the "samurai-inspired social distortion of Neo-Confucianism." (60) For this purpose alone Jinsai's revision is cast in the form of a return to the "egalitarian themes in Confucius' thought."¹² (60) These, however, are consistent with the teachings of Zhu Xi and other Song-dynasty scholars as well. Seen in this perspective, Jinsai only "nominally differentiated" his teachings from those of Song-learning, "not because of irreconcilable differences with it." (60)

Unfortunately, however, modern Japanese studies¹³ "often celebrate Jinsai's ostensible rejection of the metaphysically sophisticated version of Neo-Confucianism," thereby reflecting "an early twentieth-century bias chronic among Japanese scholars toward philosophies traceable to China." (17) Many "Western scholars"¹⁴ uncritically followed this stance as if it were beyond doubt. (17) That it is not, as Tucker points out, can be made evident by comparing Jinsai's treatment of concepts that figure prominently in Song-learning as well as in his own vision. What influenced Edo-period Confucian scholars was the definition of Song-Confucian key concepts by Zhu Xi's student Chen Beixi in *The Meaning of Confucian Terms*. At the beginning of the Edo-period, Hayashi Razan appropriated this text for his own exposition of Confucianism. This thread connecting Japanese scholars with Beixi via Razan includes Jinsai, too. Tucker succinctly states that Jinsai's "system sprang as much from the early-Tokugawa Zhu Xi School of Neo-Confucianism, and especially the semantically liberal teachings of Hayashi Razan, as it did from the ancient texts which were supposedly the semantic foundations of the *Gomô jigî*: the *Analects* and the *Mencius*." (18) It cannot be denied, of course, that the GJ contains an antagonistic stance towards Song-learning. For this, too, Tucker offers an explanation: "To the extent that it criticized Neo-Confucianism, the *Gomô jigî* did so in explicit opposition to the seemingly narrow and, in Jinsai's view, rather misguided philosophical claims expounded

12 Probably for Tucker this means moral perfectibility of every human being and welfare of the whole people as the highest aims of government.

13 Tucker does not give any names or titles. The same on p. 25.

14 Again, names or titles are missing.

by Yamazaki Ansai [...]”¹⁵ as one of those “samurai theorists” who allegedly redefined Song-Confucianism “to serve the socio-political ends of *bushi* domination.” (18) Even if Jinsai’s “semantic analyses” sometimes oppose those offered by Zhu Xi, Beixi, and Razan, often they follow from them. (24–5) Therefore, the GJ should not so much be understood as a “doctrinaire anti-Neo-Confucian work,” but rather as one “furthering the semantic project advocated by Beixi and Razan via critical revision of existing philosophical lexicography.”¹⁶ (25) What then makes Jinsai an eminent figure of Edo-period Confucianism was not his antiquarian treatment of Confucian concepts and refutation of Song-learning. Rather it has to be looked at in the impetus Jinsai gave to Confucian discourse in Japan, broadening its outlook and opening it up to strata of society other than the samurai only.¹⁷ (62)

2. Translation¹⁸

In the foreword Tucker explains his method of translation: “In order to maximize its accessibility, I have steered away from the awkward literalist approach, towards one which both translates and interprets the work, making

15 Tucker does not support this claim of “explicit” critique of Yamazaki Ansai’s 山崎闇齋 (1619–82) thought by pointing out relevant passages in his translation. As a matter of fact, Ansai – at least by name – does not figure in the GJ at all. Jinsai’s attacks are invariably levelled against Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, Chen Beixi and other exponents of Song-Confucianism in China.

16 Tucker points out similarities in the way Beixi and Jinsai treated topics central to both like the stress on “generative force” as against “principle” 理 (*ri*) (53) or the positive evaluation of “human feelings” 人情 (*ninjô*) (28). In the end, for Tucker the “difference between Jinsai’s ontology and Zhu Xi’s is, therefore, one of relative emphasis rather than real kind.” (26)

17 The advent of Confucian studies since the beginning of the 16th century marks a shift in the outlook of philosophical discourse. The “embrace of more ethically and politically well-defined uses of philosophical language [by Seika, Razan etc.] reflected a decisive intellectual and cultural shift towards an ontologically real and substantial order that was radically discontinuous with the ontic emptiness of Buddhist discourse. Jinsai’s *Gomô jigi* was decisive in influencing this shift because, in addition to its fresh, vitalistic metaphysics mirroring the new realism of the age, it implicitly precluded samurai domination of the nascent order” (62) Tucker speaks of Jinsai reconceiving “the Japanese polity along civil, essentially secular, and philosophically humanitarian lines.” (64)

18 The translation follows the NST edition of GJ. Cf. p. xiii. YOSHIKAWA Kôjirô 吉川幸次郎, SHIMIZU Shigeru 清水茂 (eds.): *Itô Jinsai, Itô Tôgai* 伊藤仁齋・伊藤東涯 (Itô Jinsai and Itô Tôgai) (NST, vol. 33), Iwanami Shoten 1971. It is based on the printed edition of 1705 (Hôei 宝永 2). Reference to this edition will be made as “NST, page number” in the main text.

it as transparent as possible.” (xiii) This is coupled with the hope that “many if not most interested readers will have, or will be developing, the language skills necessary to read the original text in Japanese.” (xiii)

Tucker has discharged his responsibility in an impressive manner. As a first glance will instantly reveal, his translation is immensely readable and gives a faithful rendering of Jinsai’s thought. However, there are mistakes, and the decision to steer “away from the awkward literal approach” has consequences that deserve some comments.

2.1 Preface

1. The second character in the original text written in Chinese is 嘗 (*jô, shô / katsute*) meaning “formerly,” “in the past.” Thus, while a literal translation of the first sentence starts “When I formerly taught students,” Tucker chooses the present tense (“I teach students”). 2. Jinsai uses binominal expressions – *ishi gomyaku* 意思語脈 and *imi ketsumyaku* 意味血脈 – central to his method of argumentation. Each consists of two independent terms of complementary nature. Both expressions are synonymous, with *gomyaku* (“vein of words”) and *ketsumyaku* (“blood veins”) signifying fundamental categories like “humaneness” 仁 (*jin*) and “rightness” 義 (*gi*) that run through the *Analects* and *Mencius*, and *ishi* (“intent”) or *imi* (“purport”) referring to the general orientation or meaning of Confucius’ and Mencius’ thought as they result from the fundamental categories.¹⁹ Tucker’s translation makes short thrift with both expressions without accounting for the independent meaning of their constituent parts although his own translation of the fourth paragraph in Chapter XX, “Learning,” suggests that *imi* and *ketsumyaku* are distinct in meaning. (187–8) Thus, he gives *ishi gomyaku* as “semantic lineage,” while the even more central *imi ketsumyaku* loses its distinctness in Tucker’s translation of *Kô Mō no imi ketsumyaku* 孔孟之意味血脈 as “semantic lineage of Confucian-Mencian philosophical notions.” Some aspects of *imi ketsumyaku* are expressed by “semantic lineage” whereas others seem to be contained in “philosophical notions.” 3. In the following sentence another key term in Jinsai’s exposition – *jigi* 字義 – is rendered as “meanings.” In the context of Tucker’s translation grammatically it relates to “philosophical notions” in the preceding phrase, however, although Jinsai uses it as a generic term in the sense of “meaning

19 For a view that interprets both as distinct notions cf. ISHIDA Ichirō 石田一郎: *Itô Jinsai* 伊藤仁齋 (Itô Jinsai) (Jinbutsu sōsho, vol. 39), Yoshikawa Kōbun Kan 1973: 130–31.

of words / characters.” In the following sentence it appears as “philological matters.” Thus it goes unnoticed that the same *jigi* is used in both cases. 4. The next but one sentence starts with “Too few scholars study such philological matters.” Tucker translates the character 小 (*shô*) as “few.” However, it means “small” or “small thing” and takes on the meaning of “precondition” here. Therefore, the sentence should be read as “For the learning of the meaning of words / characters this of course is a basic precondition” 夫字義之於學問固小矣 (*sore jigi no gakumon ni okeru makoto ni shô nari*), “this” referring to the recognition of fundamental categories and the general orientation of thought in the *Analects* and *Mencius* (*ishi gomyaku*) as well as the exhortation not to misconstrue the “meaning of words / characters” mentioned in the sentence before. 5. Tucker’s translation of the next sentence concerns the understanding of “semantic lines” (not “lineages” anymore), while the original subject – the discussion of the “meaning of words / characters” – is obscured.²⁰ Actually the text says in a more literal rendering: “If in every single case [of elucidating the meaning of words / characters] one would take the *Analects* and *Master Meng* for a base and bring it into accord with their general thought (*ishi*) and fundamental categories (*gomyaku*), it would be proper.”

2.2 General remarks

The other paragraphs by far do not elicit as many comments as the “Preface.” For the most part Tucker offers sound translations. However, there are some peculiarities the reader should be aware of.

2.2.1 Insertions. It is common practice in academic translations to insert words or even whole parts of a sentence where the original lacks in transparency and to make them easily recognizable with square brackets. Tucker does not follow this convention. The last two sentences of the first paragraph of Chapter II, “The Way of Heaven,” e.g. contain two insertions. Jinsai describes Zhu Xi’s notion of the “great ultimate” 太極 (*taikyoku*; C: *taiji*) and states in the second but last sentence of this paragraph that Zhu Xi “considered the great ultimate the most highest.” While the Chinese philosopher in Jinsai’s reading accorded the “great ultimate” the highest position in his cosmological

20 Tucker translates this sentence together with the following as “Detailed studies of the *Analects* and *Mencius* facilitate an accurate understanding of the semantic lines (*ishi gomyaku* 意思語脈) of those sagely texts, and keep students from erratically manipulating them by trying to impose their own subjective views (*shiken* 私見) on them.”

conception, Tucker translates this part as “Zhu Xi believed that the notion of the great ultimate [...] conveyed Confucius’ highest teaching [...],” thus inserting “Confucius” and “teaching” and giving the text an interpretation not warranted by the original alone. (72) The next sentence of Tucker’s translation reads: “Zhu Xi then imposed that interpretation on the ‘Appended Judgments’ (*Keiji* 繫辭) of the *Book of Changes* which so clearly states ‘yin alternating with yang refers to the way’.” (73) The original, however, just states literally: “This is the reason that being at odds with the meaning of the ‘Appended Judgments’ is so extreme.” Obviously the difference between Zhu Xi’s interpretation and the passage in the *Book of Changes* is alluded to here.

Insertions of logical components required in the target language are common practice even if they contain the translator’s interpretation. However, Tucker not only resorts to this kind of insertion but often adds complete sentences to the original even if they do not bear information necessary to make Jinsai’s text intelligible. At best they smoothen the narrative or remind the reader of certain points made earlier. To the end of the fourth paragraph of Chapter VI, “Humaneness, Rightness, Propriety, & Wisdom” (121) the translator adds: “Confucius and Mencius offered many other teachings about humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom that equally illustrate these themes.” Or consider the following insertion near the end of the fourth paragraph of Chapter VIII, “Human Nature”: “Without trying to understand the teachings of Confucius and Mencius fully, the Neo-Confucians forced their substance-function dichotomy onto the sagely Confucian writings.” (139) While these insertions make for transparency in Tucker’s light, Jinsai’s mode of thought is obscured by them. Similar unmarked insertions of various length can be found in other places, too.

2.2.2 *Omissions*. At the beginning of the third paragraph of Chapter I, “The Way of Heaven,” Jinsai tries to prove the all-pervasiveness of the “unitary generative force” (Tucker’s translation for 一元氣 *ichi genki*) by describing what happens in an empty wooden box. Although nothing is inside the box and it is closed by the top, “generative force” fills it, so that “mold” and even “termites” are born inside. What occurs inside this box also happens in the whole world at large, as “Heaven and Earth” are “one gigantic box” 一大匣 (*ichi daikyô*) themselves, and *yin* and *yang* act as the “generative force” within the box. (NST, 16) Where Jinsai explains how a box is put together from “six pieces” 板六片 (*han roppen*), Tucker translates “A box-maker makes a box by piecing together wood,” omitting the number of parts used for construction, but adding the box-maker. (73) That a box is put together

by using six pieces of wood is not important by itself. However, it would have given a touch of narrativeness to keep this tiny facet. A whole subclause is omitted from a sentence in the second paragraph of Chapter X, "Human Feelings." Tucker translates "If the minds (or sensibilities) of compassion, shame, deference, and right and wrong are not parts of the mind, what are they?"²¹, thus leaving out "that is to say something that has got a clearly visible form" 乃顯然有形者 (*sunawachi kenzen to shite katachi aru mono*) after "parts of the mind." (NST, 138)

2.2.3 Inconsistencies. In some cases Tucker chooses different expressions in English to translate the same Japanese word. The translation of *kokoro* as "mind" or "minds (or sensibilities)" is an example in case. "Moral mind" (153) as a third variant. This might not be considered a serious inconsistency, but that cannot be said in cases where variations in the translations for one and the same expression obscure key concepts in Jinsai's text. One such concept is *gi* 義 or "rightness" as Tucker translates it in most places (e.g. 115). However, when *gi* appears in the ninth paragraph of Chapter II, "The Decree of Heaven," it is translated as "morality" (p. 90: lines 11, 25; p. 91: 8), "moral issues" (p. 90: 14, 17; p. 91: 2), "morally" (p. 90: 29), "rightfully" (p. 90: 32), and "moral practice" (p. 91: 11). The character for this concept and the Japanese reading *gi* is only given in line 2 on page 91. One of the central concepts of Jinsai's whole philosophy is *jindô* 人道 or the "way of humanity" as Tucker translates the term on p. 93 (but "way of man" on p. 101). However, without reading Tucker's translation in comparison with the original, the reader would never surmise that this key term also hides behind "human affairs" on p. 94, the expression incidentally used on the same page as translation for *jinji* 人事 or, literally, "the affairs of human [beings]."²²

21 This sentence calls for another remark on the translation of *kokoro* 心 as "minds (or sensibilities)," literally "heart." On the same page and in other contexts Tucker renders *kokoro* as "mind" in the singular. This is a key concept of the GJ to which the whole of Chapter VII is devoted. There it is defined in the first sentence: "The mind is the faculty with which people think and plan" (Tucker's translation, 129). Now, *kokoro* here is the same *kokoro* as in the sentence under discussion which should be read: "If thus the heart, [that harbours] compassion and pity, shame and repugnance, modesty and deference, and [the sense for] right and wrong [inside it], that is to say something that has got a clearly visible form, is not [considered] the heart, then what is it?" NST, 58. Cf. LEINSS 1995: 213.

22 Where *jindô* or *hito no michi* 人之道 is mentioned in the same paragraph Tucker gives "way of humanity."

2.2.4 *Errors*. Occasionally Tucker's translation is mistaken. The reader might consider the following passage:

Immoral behavior (*fuzen* 不善), insofar as it exists in the world, even consists of actions like transplanting a mountain plant in a marsh, or relocating fish on top of a mountain or hill. Under such circumstances, neither the plant nor the fish could follow their natures for even one day.

The inability of people to be immoral for an entire day reveals the inherent goodness of heaven's way. (78f.)

Giving the transplantation of a mountain plant in a marsh or the relocation of fish on a mountaintop as examples of immoral behaviour sounds nonsensical. But it only sounds this way as Tucker altered the underlying structure of this sentence. Literally the passage reads:

Existing between heaven and earth [i.e. in the world] by wrong-doing [literally not-goodness] is the same as planting a mountain plant in a marsh or leaving a water dweller 水族 (*suisoku*) on top of a mountain or hill; that is to say: it is inevitable that they cannot live out their nature for even a single day. That man, too, by wrong-doing cannot stand between heaven and earth even for one day is the same [as with the plant and the water animal]. (NST, 117)

The translation of 不通 (*tsû zezu*) as "misunderstood" in a sentence from the discussion of "propriety" 礼 (*rei*) in the tenth paragraph of Chapter VI, "Humaneness, Rightness, Propriety, & Wisdom," does not fully meet Jinsai's intention. Jinsai argues about the standard for proper behaviour in concrete situations. "Ancient [rules of] propriety" 古礼 (*korei*) often do not fit contemporary circumstances. Everyday "common [rules of] propriety" 俗礼 (*zokurei*) will not do either. The next sentence in Tucker's translation reads: "On the other hand, Chinese (*Kanrei* 漢禮) rites are often misunderstood. Still the common and familiar rites of this country lack any significance."²³ (125) However, what Jinsai says is not that Chinese "[rules of] propriety" are misunderstood in Japan, which implies a mistaken interpretation on part of the Japanese, but that they do not make sense in Japan because they are not tailored to actual conditions there and thus do not fit for instant usage. Therefore the following translation is suggested: "Chinese [rules of] propriety

23 Note that Tucker renders *rei* as "propriety" at the beginning of this paragraph, as "ancient ceremonies" (*korei*) in combination with the character for "old," as "vulgar rites" 俗礼 (*zokurei*) together with the character for "common," as "Chinese rites" (*Kanrei*) together with the character for "China," and once again in combination with 俗 (*zoku*) as "common and familiar rites" (*zokurei*). For the sake of consistency I stuck to Tucker's first suggestion, "propriety," and added "rules of" in square brackets where necessary.

often make no sense in this country [i.e. Japan], and common [rules of] propriety have no significance from the outset.” (NST, 131) This interpretation not only conforms to the commentary in the NST edition (NST, 44), but it also accords with the following sentence where Jinsai states that the adjusting of “[rules of] propriety” to contemporary circumstances needs a “brilliant and accomplished refined person” 名達君子 (*meitatsu no kunshi*, Tucker’s translation) to “use the old as standard as well as to take the present into consideration, to follow the [customs of the] land” and so on.²⁴

At the end of Appendix A, “The *Great Learning* is not a Confucian Text” Jinsai explains that it is unknown who originally compiled the *Great Learning* 大学 (*Daxue / Daigaku*). He assumes that it may have been scholars from the ancient Chinese states of Qi 齊 and Lu 魯. These scholars²⁵ were well versed in the *Books of Poetry* 詩經 (*Shijing / Shikyô*)²⁶ and *History* 書經 (*Shujing / Shokyô*), but did not know the “lineage of Confucius and Mencius.” The next sentence in Tucker’s translation reads: “Qi scholars rightly defined filial piety (*kô* 孝), brotherly deference (*tei* 弟), and compassion (*ji* 慈), and consideration for others.” (235) However, in the original “Qi scholars” are not mentioned. Instead it begins with 其齊家伝以下 (*sono seika den ika*) (NST, 161). Now, the character 齊 (*sei*) of course is the same as the one used for the name of the state Qi, and 家 (*ka*) frequently means “scholar” or “school tradition.” However, these deliberations are moot as 齊家伝 (*seika den*) has a fixed meaning.²⁷ *Seika*, or “to regulate the family,” refers to one of the famous eight articles in the first part of the *Great Learning*²⁸ (according to the division established by Zhu Xi), and *den* indicates the commentaries on single articles in the second part. A literal translation of Jinsai’s sentence reads: “In the commentary on ‘regulating the family’ and the following [com-

24 Tucker does not give an exact translation of this passage but renders it as “(i) pattern new rites on ancient models, (ii) mesh those rites with local customs.” (125)

25 Tucker speaks of a single scholar although the original clearly gives a plural expression: 諸儒 (*shoju*). NST: 161.

26 Tucker gives the Japanese reading as *Shikei* on p. 209.

27 Tucker could have taken the meaning of *seika den* from the NST commentary if he had not known from the beginning. Cf. NST: 100. Apparently, however, he did know it as only a few lines onwards he correctly translates Jinsai’s quotation of the whole passage from the *Great Learning*.

28 “In order rightly to govern the state, it is necessary first to regulate the family.” Cf. SBBY: 1b, 2a, 7a–8a.

entaries] that speak of filial piety, brotherly love, and compassion and discuss the way of the measuring square, there are things I would abide with.”²⁹

3. Evaluation

The assessment of Tucker’s exercise must turn on two issues, one textual the other historiographical. Both domains subtract heavily from the achievement of publishing a full translation of GJ. Everyone engaged in translation knows the difficulty to produce a readable translation that still remains faithful to the text. Making the original “as transparent as possible” in itself is a commendable enterprise. Yet, if the translation explicitly addresses specialists as well as students in the same area, a much more faithful approach is called for. If the translation takes too much liberty with the original wording, as Tucker’s does, the reader will still be obliged to have a look at the original for himself as he never can be sure how interpretative the translation is rather than literal. At best, the translation will be (not more than) a help to find an exact rendering. So it is the freshman or the layman only who will be satisfied with readability and transparency. This notwithstanding, the translation reviewed here still is a valuable asset to the number of translations from the masterworks of Edo-period philosophers already in existence.

Historiographically, Tucker’s view of Edo-period society as consisting of four status groups with the merchants as the least respected bottom segment is problematic. In view of the level of discussion reached among historians of Edo society it appears either hopelessly antiquated or ideologically motivated.³⁰ There is no textual base for the pronounced opposition between merchants

29 In several places there are misses due to oversight. In the sentence “True wisdom (*chi no jitsu* 智之實) understands humaneness and propriety without neglecting them in practice” (121) “propriety” should be “replaced” by “rightness” as Jinsai here refers to “humaneness” and “rightness” mentioned in the preceding two sentences. On page 139 Tucker gave the characters 不敢縱其貪心 but left out *aete* for 敢 in the transliteration and wrote *hoshiimama* for 縱 with one “i” only. A mistake of the same order is giving the characters for the name of King Liang of Zhou 周 as 王靈 instead of 靈王. (247) In the introduction several mistakes of the same order can be found as e.g. “Liebniz” instead of “Leibniz” on p. 24.

30 E.g. BITÔ Masahide 尾藤正英: “Tokugawa jidai no shakai to seiji shisô no tokushitsu” 徳川時代の社会と政治の特質 (The special character of society and political thought in the Tokugawa period), *Shisô* 思想 685 (1981): 1–12; ASAO Naohiro 朝尾直弘: “Kinsei no mibun to sono henyô” 近世の身分とその変容 (Status in the early modern period and its transformation), ASAO (ed.): *Nihon no kinsei 7. Mibun to kakushiki* 日本の近世 7. 身分と格式 (Early modern Japan. Status and rank), Chûô Kôron Sha 1992: 7–40; SAITÔ Yôichi 齋藤洋一, ÔISHI Shinzaburô 大石慎三郎: *Mibun sabetsu shakai no shinjitsu* 身分

and samurai concerns as well as a hidden critique of social organization in Jinsai's thought.³¹ As a matter of fact this evaluation relies on conjecture only (e.g. 33). The argument that Jinsai's thought owed heavily to that of Song-learning is not altogether new. Sakai Naoki had highlighted the degree to which Jinsai's thought drew on Zhu Xi parasitically.³² Gerhard Leinss, too, concluded that "in view of the degree of the Song-Confucian inheritance it becomes clear that Zhu Xi's system of thought acts as the decisive point of reference in Jinsai's argumentation despite all his attacks."³³

However, Tucker's attempt to delineate the degree to which Jinsai depended on Song-Confucian themes and arguments has to be valued highly. It is an important warning against any ready attempt to mark off distinct school affiliations and a naive view of the alleged "Japanization" of Confucianism during the Edo-period. On the other hand, in evaluating Jinsai's thought on the whole, these dependencies should not preclude any differences. Reconsidering Jinsai within Song-learning is important to show up the range of possibilities for interpretation within its discourse. But at the same time taking Jinsai's attacks on Song-learning seriously offers a chance to delineate how breaks could develop in this discourse and how new lines of argumentation could take their departure from within its folds!

Thus, Tucker's work sets the stage for a fresh appraisal of Jinsai's thought. Focusing on the contribution of the social background to Jinsai's philosophy underlines the need to analyse a Confucian scholar's work not only as a monolithic unit devoid of context but to see it in relation to a surrounding set of beliefs and preoccupations of thought shared by a broader social milieu, even if Tucker himself could only postulate this connection without drawing

差別社会の真実 (The truth of society practising status discrimination) (Shinsho Edo jidai, vol. 2), Kôdan Sha 1995. Edo-period status groups indicate (1) a community made up of functions, (2) an agglomeration of individuals without an encompassing coherence. In sociological terms, there was subordination, but not so ideologically.

- 31 Tucker's identification of Song-learning with samurai-ideology, too, is open to discussion. Cf. BITÔ Masahide: *Nihon hôken shisô shi kenkyû* 日本封建思想史研究 (Studies in the feudal thought of Japan), Aoki Shoten 1963; WATANABE Hiroshi 渡辺浩: *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sô Gaku* 近世日本社会と宋学 (Early modern Japanese society and Song-learning), Tôkyô Daigaku Shuppan Kai 1985; OOMS, Herman: *Tokugawa Ideology. Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1985.
- 32 SAKAI, Naoki: *Voices of the Past. The Status of Language in Eighteenth-Century Japanese Discourse*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1992: 55.
- 33 Tucker mentions SAKAI 1992 in his bibliography but does not elaborate on his exposition of Jinsai's Song-legacy. LEINSS' study is not even in the bibliography although it goes into detail on Jinsai's reliance on Zhu Xi in several places: pp. 86-87, 103-04, 108-12.

into relief the beliefs of Jinsai's contemporaries. Stressing Jinsai's reliance on Song-Confucian conceptions, Tucker offered a possibility to do away with long held beliefs in distinct schools of thought clinically set apart from each other, opening up the way for sharpened sensibilities towards the degree to which Confucian scholars in Edo-period Japan relied on Song-period conceptions. This could result in a modification of earlier attempts to interpret Jinsai's 'solution' for a "Japanization" of Confucianism. By paying minute attention to the method of argumentation, Jinsai's use of Song-Confucian concepts as well as the points where breaks occurred – even on a small order – and new paradigms of thought took shape will come into sharper focus. Tucker's book is a valuable opening to a discussion that hopefully will start off from here.