

Joji Yorikawa (Tokyo)

Handwritten notes from Hegel's Book found in a Tokyo Bookstore

1. Introduction

A first edition copy of the first published work of German philosopher Hegel, which includes his handwritten notes, has been discovered at an antique bookstore in Tokyo. The notes were found on a flyleaf between the book cover and the main text of Hegel's first work *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, which was published in 1801. These notes contain an anonymous book review listed in the *Erlangen Literary Newspaper* in 1802, and noteworthy comments from Hegel.

How did this extremely valuable book come to be circulated in the Japanese secondhand book market? The first significant clue comes from the inscription "*Donation from Dr. Imaizumi,*" which is written inside the book's front cover. Dr. Imaizumi is the name of Rokuro Imaizumi (1861–1932), who studied at the Veterinary College in Berlin from 1890–1893. After returning to Japan, the neighboring school caught on fire, which caused the school to lose its library. When Imaizumi heard this news, he donated 118 books; including ten German books, to the library in 1914. One of those books was Hegel's *Difference Essay*. However, this book alone was thrown out for an unknown reason, and the words "*to be disposed of*" were written alongside the library ownership mark.

How did Imaizumi obtain this book, which once belonged to Hegel himself? The key to answering this question lies in the history of the secondhand bookstores in Berlin. There were two secondhand bookstores within two kilometers of where Imaizumi stayed during his study in Berlin. Imaizumi brought back fifty books that he purchased at these shops. Among these books was a book with Hegel's own writings, which belonged to him when it was released in 1801 until he passed away in 1831.

Hegel only published five books during his lifetime. One of these books was found in Japan two hundred years after its publication. Moreover, this is the only book presently known to have belonged to Hegel himself. This essay traces the fateful sequence of events that followed the publication of Hegel's in terms of how they overlapped with the life of Imaizumi.