THE TRANSFORMATION OF NEO-CONFUCIANISM IN EARLY TOKUGAWA JAPAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the past several years I have been trying to explain how and why various new Confucian schools emerged and developed in Tokugawa Japan. As You know, Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucianism, 朱子學 was often publicly and bitterly attacked by Japanese scholars who called themselves Confucianists. Quite a few of them came up with a new system of Confucian thought and published their own commentaries of Confucian classics. Their criticism of Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucianism and their assertion that they had re-discovered the original, authentic meanings of the classics sometimes resemble Chinese 考證學 , the bibliographical, exegetic schools in the 清 dynasty. Some people may think that these two may have some direct relation. This seems possible, if not probable.

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But a typical anti-Neo-Confucian scholar in Japan 伊藤仁齋 (Jinsai), some of whose ideas and at least one of whose books are remarkablly similar to those of 戴震, a representative 考證 scholar in China, was born 96 years earlier than 戴震 and died 18 years before 戴震 's birth. And so far no evidence has been found, suggesting that 仁齋 had any knowledge of 顧炎武, a roving scholar in the 清 dynasty, who is 14 years older than 仁齋 and considered to be a forerunner of 考證學. Besides, up to the present, we haven't found any particularly similar thinker in China during the 宋, 元, 明 periods.

Therefore it is hard to explain 仁齋 's thought in terms of the direct influence of some Chinese thinkers.

By the way logically speaking, the reverse is possible. A few Japanese historians have suggested the possibility that 戴震 may have been influenced by 仁齋. But I do not think it plausible and I agree to the conclusion of the article, 「戴東原與伊藤仁齋」 by Professor 余英時 of Yale University.

In any case the remarkable emergence of various new schools of Confucianism in early Tokugawa Japan should be explained mainly in terms of Japan's own history. And I have been writing a thesis concerning this question. The first half of the thesis appeared in a journal called 國家學會雜誌 in Japan last February (1981). What I am going to talk about now is mostly a summary of that thesis.

II. THE STATUS OF NEO-CONFUCIANISM IN EARLY TOKUGAWA JAPAN

Professor Masao Maruyama asserted in his very influential book called 日本政治思想史研究 in 1952 that Zhu-Xi Learning was the official orthodoxy of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the emergence of the socalled Ancient Learning Schools meant the beginning of the dissolution of the then dominant Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucian **"mode of thought."** But he himself conceded in his introduction to its English edition, **"Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan,"** published in 1974 that the assumption of the dominance of the Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucian mode of thought and its subsequent crumbling in the late 17th and early 18th centuries **"does not correspond with the ascertainable facts."**

And I happen to agree with him.

Even today Zhu-Xi Learning is often said to have been the official orthodoxy of the Tokugawa shogunate. But it was neither the official orthodoxy, nor influential politically and socially in Early Tokugawa Japan.

The shogunate never declared that Zhu-Xi Learning was the official orthodoxy, at least before

the socalled 寛政異学の禁 ,the 1790 ban on heterodoxies. It forced people to register their affiliation with a Buddhist temple, but never forced them to learn Confucianism. Unlike in China, Korea and Vietnam there was no state examination system. As you know Japanese were ruled by the here ditary samurai class, not scholar-officials. Besides in 1687 only 4 domains had domainal schools and only 10 in 1715. Domainal schools were strange, new and unusual institutions at that time. Hayashi Razan 林羅山, a Zu-Xi Confucianist, served the first shogun Ieyasu 家康 and his three successors. That's true. But he was used only as a living encyclopaedia, as it were, and as a drafter of some formal documents. Simply because he was employed by the shoguns does not mean that he was a mentor or an Ideologue of the Tokugawa shogunate. Shoguns used any scholars they needed as well as Buddhist priests, Shintoists, medical doctors, Noh actors, masters of Japanese chess and so on. It is true that the shogunate promoted Confucianism in a very broad sense once in a while and it is true that the socalled **"Prohibition of Heterodoxies"** took place in 1790. But I'd like to remind you that at the time of the socalled **"Prohibition."** 国学者 , National Learning scholars like Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, who severely criticized Confucianism per se were never brought to question. The shogunate did not try to bring people's thinking into line with Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucianism.

Besides, particularly in the early period, Confucianism, to say nothing of Zhu-Xi learning was not so influential. Samurais were not mandarins. There specialty was not reading and writing, but fighting and killing. And they were proud of it. There is a Chinese proverb, which says 好鉄不打釘 , 好人不當兵 , which means **"good iron is not used for nails, a good man does not become a soldier."** But in Japan we say " Hanawa Sakuragi, Hito wa bushi 花は桜木,人は武士 " which means **"As for blossoms cherries are best, as for men samurais are best."** Samurai families gained their status by fighting with swords and spears during the long **"Warring States"** period. Besides, even after the battle of Osaka in 1614 and 1615 nobody in Japan foresaw that peace would follow for 250 years. Immediately after that battle Bukeshohatto 武家諸法度 Shogun's Decrees for Daimyos was promulgated and daimyos were ordered never to forget war while in peace (治まりて乱を忘れず) and samurais were expected to be always prepared for action. They kept on waiting for the next battle day after day, year after year, only it did not come for 250 years.

Therefore samurais were not willing to forsake their readiness to fight so easily, though, of course they slowly changed and became like bureaucrats. Especially in the 17th century they sometimes followed their lords in death by Harakiri Seppuku and were quick to take offence and fight with each other even to the death, for unfortuately they had no chance to show their bravery and fighting skills in real battles. One samurai composed a short poem on his deathbed. It is "口惜や,畳の上の ,のたれ死,目出た過たる御世に生れて" which means, **"Oh what a shame it is that I am dying unavailingly on the tatam; and not on the battle field for being born in an age too good!"**

So, as many Confucianists deplored, it was unusual that a samurai was interested in

books, let alone Confucianism in the 17th century, particularly before the reign of the fifth shogun 綱吉 (Tsunayoshi) 中江藤樹 (Nakae Tōju), a famous Confucianist was a samurai in his youth. According to the biography by his disciples, since his fellow samurais were interested only in military arts and despised any literature, young 藤樹 was compelled to read Confucian books at night in secret. It's even a little similar to the situation of secret Christians at that time, isn't it ?

Most samurais regarded any learning as the job of Buddhist bonzes and court nobles in Kyoto and as unsuitable for manly, gallant warriors.

Besides, people who studied Confucianism themselves often considered it to be one of the cultural arts, in Japanese 稽古事 or 遊藝 ,like flower arrangement, tea ceremony, 謡 (Utai) , 俳句 (Hai ku) and so on, which had almost nothing to do with the daily needs of life, let alone real politics.

Therefore a professional Confucian employed by a daimyo, if any, was usually treated as an outsider by the samurais, like physicians. Moreover many socalled Confucians were simultaneously physicians. And actually many of them such as 林羅山 were ordered to shave off their hair like bonzes. It was very rare that such people had any influence on the political processe of their domains even in the late 18th century.

In 17th century Tokugawa Japan various Confucian books were imported from China and Korea. Most of them were those of the school of Cheng brothers and Zhu-Xi, prevailing there at the time. Japanese first learned Confucian classics mostyly through that school's interpretations. Also quite a few Confucian books were reprinted in Japan, though much fewer than Buddhist books.

But the circumstances of Confucianism and Confucianists in Japan were very different from those in China and Korea. As long as Zhu-Xi learning was kept within a library as a mere foreign-made complex system of knowledge, it caused no trouble. But once a Confucianist tried to use it as his ethical, social, political norm and philosophy, as it originally was, he faced a lot of contradictions between its teachings and his surroundings, and even between its teachings and his own moral sentiments. I think many issues on which Japanese Confucianists had debates came directly or indirectly from those contradictions and I think further that here lies the main cause for the transformation of Neo-Confucianism and the emergence of various new Confucian thoughts including the socalled Ancient Learning in Tokugawa Japan up to the early 18th century.

So, next, I'd like to enumerate and explain briefly some of the contradictions and problems Japanese Confucianists found.

III. PROBLEMS FOR JAPANESE CONFUCIANISTS

(i) Hōken (Fengjian), Emperor, Shogun

It was not easy for Japanese Confucianists just to explain the political institution at that time according to Confucian theory. They noticed that contemporary China had a centralized bureaucratic system and it was very different from theirs. So according to the traditional dichotomy they regarded China as 郡県 and Japan as 封建. 封建 means the political social system in which powers are distributed by a king to hereditary local lords *(By the way this word is used as a translation of "feudalism" in modern China and Japan)* and tradition claimed that the ancient sage kings adopted 封建 system. In this sense, as is often pointed out, the Tokugawa regime provided a suitable frame for introducing Confucianism. But if so, who was the king? From the definition of 封建 you cannot but conclude that the Tokugawa Shogun 徳川将軍 was the king. Some famous Confucianists like 新井白石, 室鳩巣, 荻生徂徠, 太宰春臺 called the Shogun 国王 or 王 ,king, who had directly received the mandate of heaven after Tokugawa had defeated Toyotomi. But if this is the case, what is the 天皇 in Kyoto?

On the other hand, if you stick to Zhu-Hi's strict legitimism as shown in his 資治通鑑綱目, the Outline and Digest of the General Mirror for Government, you may have to conclude that the 天皇 in Kyoto is the only legitimate king. If so, what is the relation between the 天皇 and 将軍? Is the 将軍 a usurper, as some Confucianists tacitly concluded? Or did the 天皇 entrust his sovereign power to the 将軍, as many people began to believe after the late 18th century?

I will not go further now. But in any case this question became one of the causes that goaded Japanese Confucianists to apply and sometimes to revise Confucian political theory in their own way.

(ii) Sinocentrism

Next, there was the Problematik of Sinocentrism, that is the Confucian theory to distinguish 中華 or the middle kingdom from the peripheral barbarians. Though this was a longstanding question, it arose as an urgent question as Confucianism became gradually influential with the rapid economic growth in the early Tokugawa period. Is China the center of the world? Is Japan one of the eastern barbarian nations around China?

In contemporary Korea the ruling scholar-officials considered the Korean dynasty to be the only holder of orthodox Chinese culture and Confucian teachings, because mainland China was under the rule of the Manchus, the northern barbarians at that time. They called their country 小中華 ,the small center of the world. It may have been a comfortable interpretation for them. But no Japanese Confucianists had the nerve to call the Tokugawa regime

with its illiterate samurais the only holder of orthodox Chinese culture.

So, some Confucianists aknowledged that Japan was a barbarian nation, though naturally they were not very popular. Some Confucianists like 伊藤仁齋 opposed any strict distinctions of middle and periphery, asserting the ubiquity of the Way. There were other ways to handle this question. 山鹿素行 dared to call Japan 中華 or 中国, the middle kingdom, because Japan had a superior climate, water, soil and people to any other country except China, which was the only peer of Japan. In his famous book called 中朝事實 ,**"The Facts of the Middle kingdom"** he read as many Confucian virtues as he could into the Japanese myth and the ancient chronologies and boasted that there had indigenously existed the right teachings and the Way in Japan even before the introduction of Confucian classics from China.

淺見絅齋 , who is one of the outstanding disciples of 山崎闇齋 invented a strange new theory. He stripped the concept of 中華 or 中國 , the middle kingdom of any racial, geographical, cultural and moral connotations and said:

> ***The country where one was born and raised is his middle kingdom. Chinese sages called China the middle kingdom, because they were Chinese. According to the sages' teaching, we Japanese should call Japan the middle kingdom and China a barbarian country. Every independent nation can think this way. In this sense there is no distinction among nations.***

I am not sure whether this is particularistic or universalistic. But in any case this was a convenient interpretation for Confucianists of Japan, a barbarian country. Some 水戸學 and National Learning scholars in the 19th century also adopted this theory.

(iii) Shintoism

In relation to Sinocentrism, the interpretation of Shintoism was also a question. Not only was Shintoism combined with folkways very influential still, but also Shintoist theologians like 渡會延佳 and 吉川惟足 were active at that time. In 1650 the first wave of お陰まいり , the epidemic pilgrim ruch to the great 伊勢 shrine of the Sun-goddess occured. In 1705 more than three million pilgrims descended upon the 伊勢 shrine from all over the country. Chinese philosophers did not teach how to deal with Shintoism, though they taught about Buddhism in detail. So, Japanese Confucianists had to use their own brains. As they were a tiny minority at that time, they often shied away from antagonizing the powerful Shintoistic beliefs. 林羅山 tried to explain a Shintoist theology according to Neo-Confucian concepts. For instance, according to him Kami, Shintoist, deity is nothing but another name for 理 , principle. 熊澤蕃山 said that 天照皇大神 , the sun goddess, who is the ancestor of the emperors, according to Japanese myth, is the same person as the ancient Chinese wiseman 泰伯 , the uncle of the sage king 文 , who is said to have moved out of China to a barbarian area. By this 蕃山 asserted the fundamental unity and the same origin of the Confucian Way and Shinto. 山崎闇齋 ,

a famous advocate of Zhu-Xi learning was, at the same time, an ardent Shintoist. Though he rejected mixing the two teachings, he believed their essential unity and his Shintoist theology had much in common with his peculiar interpretations of Zhu-Xi learning.

(iv) Benevolent Government

Next, I'd like to point out the question of political thought. During the Warring States period, Daimyos and samurais kept on fighting with each other in order to acquire more power and wealth. 武田信玄, a famous 大名 once said:

> ***Why do I have so many warriors? It's to win a battle. To win a battle is to expand the territory. Only when I expand the territory, can I give my men rewards. It is the purpose of samurai life to get new fiefs and to rise up in the world.***

It is clear that samurais fought not for the people, peasants and townsmen. They neither thought so, nor did they claim so. Victory in a battle was the purpose for their organization and peasants and townsmen existed in order to keep it functioning by supplying them with food and munitions. It was no great secret. Even until the end of the Tokugawa period, the administration over the peasants was up to 勘定奉行, minister of finance, who was originally in charge of collecting supplies for war. Since the daily governing of peasants in the country side was not a warrior-like job, the status of 代官, local administrators of shogunal demesne was very low, as many Confucianists deplored.

Therefore especially in the early period, samurais' feelings about administration and politics were very different from Confucian political thought, according to which a virtuous man should be a king under the mandate of heaven and the raison d'être of a king is to love and cherish and teach the people, by extending his own inner virtuousness. As peacetime continued, Confucian influence spread more and more. In 1785 a daimyo even declared in his will to his son that the domain and the people do not exist for the lord, but hte lord exists for the domain and the people.

But especially in the early Tokugawa period, Confucianism was often regarded as unrealistic and impractical. Authorities often looked down Confucianists as ideologists who did not understand real politics. As I said before, they rarely allowed a Confucianist to paticipate in the political process.

This peculiar situation deeply influenced Japanese Confucianism. In many cases they were interested only in writing poems and rhetorical essays in classical Chinese. In some cases they focused on individual ethics and did not discuss politics. They became preachers of morals and exhorted people to live ethically within their hereditary status. But a few people like 熊澤蕃山 and 荻生徂徠 transformed Neo-Confucianism in order to make Confucianism useful and practical for Japanese politics.

(v) Lord and Vassal

The relationship between lord and vassal was also a question. For a samurai it was essentially a personal relationship. It was supported by the exchange of services and rewards. But it was not a cool relation of calculated interest, it was deeply colored by emotion. As samurais were very proud and always sought fame, they were very sensitive to the recognition by other samurais, especially by his lord of their courage and ability on the battle field. When his lord did not express his recognition and thanks by giving enough reward of land or money or a word of praise, a samurai would feel insulted. He sometimes ran away from the lord in indignation, but sometimes he fought even harder at the next battle to show his value as a warrior. A cunning lord would insult his warriors to encourage them before an important battle.

In the case of hereditary vassals, 譜代 the relationship was not only emotional but also considered unseverable. A representative 譜代 samurai of the 徳川, 大久保彦左衛門 who died in 1639 once said, "Good or bad, my lord. 譜代 samurai is a loyal dog in the lord's house." His attachment to the lord's house was so strong that the more keenly he felt that he was illtreated by his lord late in his life, the more ardent became his intention to be loyal. He aspired that someday his descendants would have a chance to show who is the most loyal and valuable warrior among the 徳川 followers. He warned all his descendants in his will that if they should betray their lord 徳川 and disgrace his family name, he would return from the tomb and bite their throats and kill them. This kind of psychology may be strange to modern people. But this was not unusual in the early Tokugawa period as you can find in popular literature, records of battles, books of 武士道 like 葉隠 and so on. They were not servile. They dedicated themselves to their lord. because they clung to their fame and honor. Daimyo's armies comprised of samurais were built up on these personal bonds. A historian has compared it to a harem where numerous concubines are competing with their beauty and charm for the mester's love. As you may know, the author of 葉隠 ,a samurai called his loyalty 忍恋、an ardent, secret love in the early 18th century.

After Pax Tokugawa arrived, social mobility decreased and vassals' positions were handed down to their sons generation after generation. Most samurais became hereditary vassals, or 譜代, the loyal dog of the house of the lord, the lord, good or bad. Without doubt some samurais weakened in their loyalty, but at least their sense of unity with the domain became more and more solid and almost like a blood relationship.

This relationship of samurai and his lord is extremely different, in any phase, from that of the Chinese scholar-official and emperor. And of course it's dissimilar to the Neo-Confucian ideal of this relationship. For instance, 朱熹 emphasized, in line with the long Confucian tradition, that the emperor and the officials are connected to each other through 義, righteousness. Its purpose is realization of the way under heaven and it continues as long as either party follows the Way. "A lord and a vassal relate to each other for righteousness and

by righteousness. If a vassal disagrees with his lord, he has to resign," 朱熹 said, according to the teaching of 禮記, Book of Rites that when a lord does not listen to his remonstrances three times, the vassal should quit. In China an official could simultaneously be a private landlord. So even after he had quit, he could live a decent life. 朱熹's teaching was, therefore, possible to observe in China.

A disciple of 朱熹 wrote in the biography of his master.

> ***The master worried about the affairs of state all the time. When he heard the defects of the current administration, he was distressed. When he spoke of the deteriorated situation of the state, tears would at last drop from his eyes. However, he respected the ancient manner, 禮 that a virtuous man hesitates to serve. Therefore whenever he was offered an official position, he tried hard to decline it. He made much of the ancient manner, 禮 that a good vassal does not hesitate to resign. Therefore whenever his opinion did not coincide with the lord's he resigned immediately. He dared not impair the Way to get and keep his official position. He dared not compromise with vulgar opinions, because he had sympathy with the people.***

This is a Very rationalistic relationship. There is no emotional attachment to the lord. He shies away from serving, because he respects the principle more.

According to 朱熹's definition, 忠, loyalty means wholeheartedness, 盡己之心 or 實心. Then one of his disciples once asked him.

> ***忠 is wholeheartedness. We should have it at all times in daily life. Why is 忠 exhorted only with regard to service to the lord?***

朱熹 answered.

> ***The relationships of son and father, husband and wife, and between brothers are the principle of heaven 天理. Everybody knows wholeheartedness naturally in those cases. The relationship of a vassal and the lord is also the principle of heaven, but it is the relationship of 義, righteousness. Therefore people tend to be halfhearted. So, it is exhorted. Wholeheartedness is exhorted where it tends to be insufficient.***

We can see the rationalistic, normative character of 朱熹's image of the lord-vassal relationship here. The contrast with samurai's relationship and his lord is really remarkable.

And yet Japanese Confucianists thought of samurai's relationship when they read Neo-Confucian teachings on the scholar-official's relationships. They must have been embarrassed sometimes. They used same terms and wrote in classical Chinese, but we have to understand that what they were talking about was quite different from what Chinese philosophers had talked about.

So here too was a big task for Japanese Confucianists. It seems to me that most of them accepted or compromised with the samurai version of the loyalty relationship.

Unlike in China, in Japan a vassal's duty to his lord often came to be regarded as prior to his duty to his father, as many scholars have pointed out. And Confucianists almost unanimously applauded the deed of 赤穂 masterless samurais, the heroes of the famous play 忠臣藏, though there were a few conspicuous exceptions.

A famous 朱熹 scholar, 浅見絅齋 asserted that if you are not in real, deep love with your lord, you cannot be said to be loyal. (真ニ主君ガイトシウテナラヌトテコノ至誠惻怛ノヤウニ抜ケタデナケレバ忠デナイ) It instantly reminds us of 葉隠 's author who compared his loyalty to an ardent, secret love. According to 絅齋 such unconditional loyalty is the root of 朱熹 's philosophy. His own interpretation of 仁 , benevolence or humanity has something to do with his concept of loyalty.

Also, he rejected to justify the revolution by ancient Chinese sages against tyrants. This is clearly against 朱熹 's teaching. But this rejection, I. believe, had plenty of persuasiveness to samurais, who thought their lord was their lord, good or bad.

(vi) Revolution

Generally speaking, the concept of revolution was often trouble some for Japanese Confucianists. There were several reasons.

First, as I said just now, many hereditary samurais felt the idea that a vassal can expel his lord to be inexcusable.

Secondly, Confucian justification of revolution in terms of the benefit of the governed people was not necessarily persuasive to them. As I said before, it was not evident to them that a lord exists for the people.

Thirdly, there was 天皇 in Japan. His position was not legitimized by the mandate of heaven. Unlike Chinese emperors he was not the adopted son of heaven by the mandate, but the real son of heaven, as it were, according to Japanese myths. Therefore, it was logically unthinkable to expel a 天皇 . All Shintoists were adamant against any theory of revelution. Some people did not hesitate to call the ancient Chinese sages the criminals of high treason.

This situation naturally influenced Confucianists. Some contrived to make the Confucian teaching coexist with such feelings by various feats of acrobatic logic. Some rejected the idea of revolution flatly.

(vii) Cultivating Self and Governing People

One of the socalled four books which Neo-Confucianists particularly respected among classics is 大學 , the Great Learning. 大學 teaches that first a person should cultivate himself by learning and then he should put his family in order, and then govern his nation well and pacify the whole world. This was not a total illusion in China. Because there was the state examination system. If a man was well-learned, he could become an official and even a prime minister of the great middle kingdom. Besides, Chinese scholar-officials were real elites. Once he became a local governer, which is the most usual position, he was at once a mayor and prosecutor and judge and chief of police and local representative of the IBS. As Mr. 瞿同祖 pointed out in his book on local government under the 清 ,he was often the

only scholar-official in his local government. All of his staf were townsmen who worked in the government to get fees and bribes. Mr. 曾 called it **"one-man government."** It was a verty difficult, responsible position, but at the same time he could make it an interesting position. People who got that position including 牛 [illegible] and other Chinese Neo-Confucian philosophers could and had to judge many things by themselves and handle the daily administration of government.

In such circumstances, it was not preposterous to believe that you can govern the people benevolently and righteously by cultivating yourself by means of the **"investigation of things"** and **"sustained seriousness."** It was not unreasonable to believe that exact understanding in ontology leads you to successful cultivation of self and that successful cultivation of self promises excellent achievement as the **"parent of the people."** In this sense, as it is often said, Neo-Confucianism was the expression of the Chinese scholar-officials' Weltanschauung.

On the other hand the circumstances of those who were learned in Zhu-Xi learning in Tokugawa Japan were almost ridiculously different from those of Chinese scholar-officials.

First, most professional Confucians had no access to the governmental process. A teacher was once asked in the late 18th century.

> ***We have only small families. We have no people to govern. We can handle our lives without any help from learning. Is learning of any use to us?***

Secondly, Japanese samurais were not such elites as mandarins. During peacetime they worked in a domain as guardsmen of a castle, janitors of mansions, keepers of the lord's furniture and clothes, attendants to the lords, overseers of contruction and engineering works as well as ministers and judges. In China and Korea many of them were jobs of eunuchs, clerks, runners and technicians, not of scholar-officials. They have little to do with the Confucian ideal of benevolentg governing of the people, as some Confucianists admitted. Besides samurais wre hereditary members of a tightly-knit organization of a domain. They were not the bosses of local governments. Most of them lived in a castle town with their several hundred to a few thousand colleagues generation after generation. They had to be organization men.

They could rarely feel the lofty responsibility of nourishing the people under heaven. Their lives as members of a domain hardly required the investigation of heavenly principle, let alone for townsmen and farmers who had to be always attentive to their neighbors and relatives not to be hated and ostracized.

It was widely said during the Tokugawa period that a man became disputative, contentious, faultfinding and hasty if he learned Neo-Confucianism. It was almost like a proverb. How come? I think one of the reasons is the difference in the circumstances or lives of the people who learned Neo-Confucianism. It is understandable that a person who, believing his essential inner unity with heavenly principle acts like a determined leader of a one-man government in a tightly-knit organization of a domain or a town or a village, would not be terribly popular among his colleagues and neighbors.

So, many Japanese Confucianists began to criticize Zhu-Xi learning as a source of trouble as I'll explain you later.

Especially scholars of the socalled Ancient Learning schools attacked the concept of

man's original nature which was another name for heavenly principle in us, on the ground that it justified contentiousness and arbitrary, subjective judgment. They even asserted that Zhu-Xi learning was hostile to the real human world.

I do not think Zhu-Xi learning is hostile to the human world in itself. But it was, in a sense, really hostile to the human, personal relationships in Tokugawa Japan. Ancient Learning shcools did not arise as criticism of the orthodoxy of Tokugawa Japan. It was the criticism of an alien thought from the view point of Tokugawa Japan.

In my understanding Ancient Learning schools were the result of the effort to transform Zhu-Xi learning in order to help introduce Confucian thought to Tokugawa Japan.

There were other problems for Japanese Confucianists such as the difference in family structure and the absence of 禮, Chinese manners and rites. They were also very important. But I won't discuss about them now.

IV. CONCLUSION

In my understanding the history of Confucianism in the early Tokugawa period was not a declining process of the once dominant Zhu-Xi Neo-Confucian mode of thought as Profesor Maruyama 丸山 asserted. Nor was it a simple progressing from metaphysical thinking toward scientific or practical thinking. I think that it was a history of continous attempts by Confucianists to adapt foreign thought to Japanese society and culture.

Look at the institutions of the Tokugawa Shogunate, look at the diaries and memoris of samurais or the plays of 近松門左衛門 or the novels of 井原西鶴 or anything written by non-scholars in the early Tokugawa period. They were often deplorably, even disgustfully, in the eyes of Confucianists, away from the teachings of sages and their interpretations by Chinese masters.

Confucianists in the early Tokugawa period were not surrounded by a Confucian culture or regime. Of course, on the other hand, they were respected by some due to the long-standing prestige of Chinese culture in Japan. And there were quite a few common social and cultural conditions in Japan and China, such as the existence of hereditary rulers and their proud vassals, the importance of family, agriculture and continuity. Samurais needed something to do in peacetime and something to explain and justify their status in peacetime. Literacy rose rapidly along with rapid economic growth in the 17th century. It is understandable that the ethicosocial philosophy dominant in neighboring countries from which Japanese had been learning since ancient times gradually increased its influence on Tokugawa Japan.

But still Japanese Confucianists wre not scholar-officials. Especially in the early period they had to sell foreign thought to their readers and audiences, and even to themselves. So, from the early 17th century they started to revise and transform, to some degree, Neo-Confucianism consciously or unconsciously.

Generally speaking there were several ways of making adaptations.

First, some Confucianists tried to distinguish What is absolute from what is relative in the teachings of the sages. They asserted that some teachings had to be observed in any country and in any period, but other teachings did not need ot be observed in Japan of that day. 熊澤蕃山 was a representative thinker of this type. He relativised many teachings by emphasizing the necessity of considering the difference of time, place and occasion. He was widely respected throughout the Tokugawa period. And most Confucianists seem to have dopted to some degree that kind of relativism. And some Confucianists emphasized only what were supposedly important and essential and ignored or rejected what they considered to be unimportant in Zhu-Xi learning. I think 山崎闇齋 was one of them, though he claimed strongly to be an authentic Zhu-Xi scholar and asserted that those who did not agree with him were heretical. His hidden criterion, it seems to me, came from the moral sentiment of hereditary samurais. Some of his disciples like 浅見絅齋 went this way further and actually revised Zhu-Xi learning considerablly while strongly asserting the legitimacy of his learning.

And some other Confucianists chose to attack Zhu-Xi learning publicly and claimed to have rediscovered the original teachings of the ancient Chinese sages. These were Confucianists of the socalled Ancient Learning Schools. Needless to say, what they claimed to be ancient was not necessarily ancient. As a matter of fact they came up with new thoughts which were supposedly necessary and suitable for contemporary Japanese people and society.

山鹿素行's 聖學, the holy learning, which is usually included in the Ancient Learning Schools seems to be devised to offer a helpful guide and meaning in samurai's daily life. Though he denied the existence of 理, principle in human nature, one of the basic assumptions of Neo-Confucianism, he still used many Neo-Confucian categories and concepts. In that sense his learning may be called one revision of Neo-Confucianism.

But, 伊藤仁齋's 古義學, the learning of Ancient Meaning is backed by his new systematic interpretations of the Confucian classics and is, clearly, very suitable for the life of merchants like 仁齋 himself.

And finally the 古文辭學, the learning of ancient sentences and words of 荻生徂徠 is, in my understanding, an attempt to sell Confucianism to the Japanese government. In his opinion the reason why the way of the sages looks useless or unsuitable at the time is that it was misinterpreted by later Chinese scholars; the way of the sages, who were themselves kings, is the way to stabilize a country and the useful tool of politics, as the prosperity and continuity of the dynasties of the ancient sages prove. He based his argument especially on his unique interpretations of the Confucian Analects, using and showing his outstanding knowledge of classical Chinese and literature. And he also emphasized the necessity of learning Chinese poems and literature and tacitly justified the Japanese students' lasting tendency toward the learning as a snoblish 遊藝, cultural art. On the other hand, as you know, he urged the eighth shogun 吉宗 to implement his policy proposals to solve a number of social problems and to make the shogun's government stable and permanent.

His learning had tremendous influence on Japanese intellectuals, conquering the Confucian circles by the middle of the 18th century. [illegible]'s learning was, it seems to me, the most successful, systematic contrivance to introduce Confucianism to Japanese society. It con-

tributed a lot to Confucianism's settling in Japanese society. Generally speaking, the Japanization of Confucianism progressed simultaneously with Confucianization of Japan.

But still Sorai's learning was not adopted by the shogunate and in 1729 his most famous disciple 太宰春臺 sadly compares himself to a man in a Chinese story, who, having spent half of his lifetime to master the skill of slaughtering a dragon, finally could not find any dragon to slaughter.

Here are the symbolic words of 富永仲基 , a distinguished free-thinker in 1744. He criticized not only Confucianism of any kind including 仁斎's and 徂徠's, but also Buddhism and Shintoism, saying:

> ***Buddhism is the Way of India after all. Confucianism is the Way of China after all. They are not the Japanese Way. Shintoism is a Japanese Way. But it is not today's way. A way should be a way not with standing the differences of time and place. A way which we cannot follow cannot be a true way, because the word, way means what we can follow. So, any of these three teachings is not a true way, after all.***

Of course, this does not mean that Confucianism failed in Japan totally, 仲基 himself is under the strong influence of 徂徠, who showed that a Japanese can criticize prestigious Chinese masters including Mencius and Could make use of the classics. 徂徠 set an example, or a paradigm and after him very few escaped his shadow.

Since 徂徠's time, in particular since 仲基's time most prominent intellectuals were not interested in the introduction of Confucianism as such, but they started rather freely from their own concerns, not from classics and authorities, and they would use any conceptual tools they needed, including Dutch learning.