

The Transmission of Neo-Confucianism to the Ryukyu (Liuqiu) Islands and Its Historical Significance:

Ritual and Rectification of Names in a Bipolar Authority Field

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On April 30, 1846, a missionary-physician by the name of Bernard Jean Bettelheim (1811-70) landed in Okinawa, capital of the Ryukyu 琉球 Kingdom, deposited by a British warship for the purpose of evangelization.¹ His sponsors--the "Loochoo Naval Mission"²--no doubt hoped that his winning of hearts for Christ would also help persuade the Ryukyu leaders to open their country to Western trade. Since the Opium War, the Western nations had been putting increasing pressure on Japan's seclusion policy, causing much concern among the bakufu and domainal leaders. Shimazu Nariakira 島津齊彬 (1809-58), daimyo of the southernmost domain of Satsuma, felt that this pressure could be alleviated by permitting limited foreign contact at the Okinawan port of Naha 那霸, and the shogunate accepted his proposal in 1846.

If the Ryukyus--lying between the southernmost Japanese province and the traditional colonial lands of the "Southern barbarians" in Taiwan and Southeast Asia--was thus seen by the shogunate as a buffer state for protecting the seclusion policy, then by the same token it would have appeared to informed Westerners as a wedge for their project of breaking down that same policy. Foreigners were still not supposed to be allowed into Ryukyu, and the king's government was reluctant to grant permission to stay, but Bettelheim would not take no for an answer. He was finally allowed to stay, but his movements were restricted to the area of the Gokokuji 護國寺 Temple. Christianity being prohibited by law, his requests for permission to evangelize were flatly rejected by the palace. Undaunted, Bettelheim threw himself into the study of the Ryukyuan language, and as soon as he could communicate in the language he began to preach, even on the street corners. After three years of hard work, however, he reported back to his sponsors that he had been unable to gain any followers because of the tremendous resistance put up against his evangelization efforts. He

¹ Bettelheim--the first Protestant missionary in either Ryukyu or Japan--was no ordinary character. Born in Hungary, he earned a medical doctorate in Italy in 1836, after which he immigrated to Britain. Originally Jewish, he converted to Protestantism, marrying an English lady, taking on British citizenship, and working as a military doctor. He had an incredible facility with languages, and by the time of his stay in Ryukyu he knew as many as thirteen tongues (including Chinese, Japanese and Ryukyuan).

² The origins of this Mission go back to 1816, when two British naval vessels spent forty some days in Naha. Upon their return, an organization was formed with the purpose of sending missionaries to Ryukyu.

quoted the following letter that he had received from the Ryukyu royal court, explaining their kingdom's lack of need for his religion:

The people of our country have from ancient times exclusively studied the Way of Confucius and Mencius. Individuals use it to cultivate their persons and order their families, while the state uses it as the guiding principle for the conduct of government. The fact that we have been able to establish a stable, peaceful country where the people feel secure and content is because this Way has entered deeply into the people's hearts over a long period of time!³

This may be a rather idealized view of Ryukyuan history, but it does give a reasonable picture of the historical experience of the educated ruling class. For centuries Confucianism had been established as the official state orthodoxy, and Confucian ideas had been promulgated as the core of education. But through what process and under what motivations, we may ask, did Confucianism become so well established in a small ocean kingdom quite removed from the major centers of Chinese and Japanese civilization? Through what channels were Confucian teachings transmitted to the region, and in what ways did these teachings influence its society and political culture? In a country approximately equidistant from China and Japan, what were the respective roles of these two countries in this cultural transmission? What was the relationship between the transmission of Confucianism and the complex economic relationships the Ryukyu kingdom maintained with China and Japan? Finally, did the Ryukyans make any distinctive contributions of their own to the advancement of Confucian civilization? In seeking the answers to these questions, the present paper will survey the history of the establishment of Neo-Confucianism in the Ryukyus, focusing on the motivations and achievements of the four individuals who contributed most to this transmission: Tomari Jochiku 泊如竹, Xiang Xiangxian (Shô Jôken) 向象賢 or Haneji Chôshû 羽地朝秀, Cheng Shunze (Tei Junsoku) 程順則, and Cai Wen (Sai On) 蔡溫.

Ryukyu's Tribute and Investiture Relationship with Ming China

The Ryukyu rulers first established a tributary relationship with the Chinese court in the fifth year of the reign of Emperor Ming Taizu 明太祖 (r. 1368-98). The island of Okinawa had at that time been divided for years into three competing kingdoms: Nanzan 南山, Chûzan 中山, and Hokusan 北山. Hoping to establish a basis for asserting his superiority over the other kings, King Satto 察度 (r. 1350-95) of the Chûzan kingdom sent his younger brother in 1372 to offer tribute to the Ming court. As was customary, the court presented this mission with gifts worth many times more than the tribute received. Not to be outdone, the other two kings also

³ "Letter From B. J. Bettelheim, M.D., Giving an Account of His Residence and Missionary Labour in Lewchew During the Last Three Years," *Chinese Repository*, 19 (1850), pp. 17-36. Another cause of Bettelheim's discouragement was the fact that he had been beaten up by a gang of thugs in October 1847, while attending the funeral ceremonies for King Shô Iku 尚育.

dispatched tribute missions. On learning of this competitive situation Ming Taizu sent a message to each of the three kings decrying the rivalry among them and the suffering that it was imposing on the people, and enjoining them to lay down their arms and to work together for the prosperity of their country.

In 1392 King Satto sent his heir-apparent to China as a member of that year's tribute delegation. His mission was to submit a request for skilled personnel to assist in technological and cultural development while furthering the diplomatic and trade relationship with China. Taizu generously acceded to the petition, granting the king 36 Fujianese families skilled in shipbuilding, navigation, and the writing of documents.⁴ These immigrants were set up with land, salaries, and special privileges in Kumemura 久米村 on the Okinawan coast west of Naha. The king further petitioned that sons of the Ryukyuan royal family be allowed to study in China, a request which was also granted. Thus when King Shô Hashi 尚巴志 (r. 1422-39) united the island of Okinawa under one rule in 1429, many of his advisors were scholars who had returned from study in China imbued with Confucian concepts of government and ritual. Later, as part of the efforts of King Shô Shin 尚眞 (r. 1477-1526) to build a centralized political system, Confucian classics were imported, and strong encouragement was given to the building of clan temples and ancestral shrines.⁵

A further correlate of the tribute relationship was the rite of investing (C. *cefeng* 冊封; J. *sakuhô*; R. *sappô*) the Ryukyu king as a vassal of the Chinese emperor, a practice initiated in 1403. Through this supreme ritual act the Ryukyu system of political authority was symbolically incorporated into the hierarchical system of world order centering on the Chinese imperial throne. Being accepted into this system offered many benefits, of course, but it also imposed heavy responsibilities upon the tributary state. Some time after each new accession to the throne, the Ryukyu court was required to send a mission to China to humbly request the sending of an imperial investiture embassy to perform the ceremonies to formally legitimize the succession.⁶ While in the Chinese capital the Ryukyu envoys (*qingfengshi* 請封使) had to conform precisely to ritual precedent to assure the acceptance of their request. The head of the ensuing embassy to Ryukyu, always a high-ranking official, was called the "Emissary of Heaven" (*tianshi* 天使), a fitting illustration of the conceptual nature of the tribute relationship. The reception of the emissary and his retinue at the Ryukyu royal capital also had to be ritually correct in every way.

⁴ These 36 families were granted by the Ming emperor partly during the Hongwu 洪武 reign period (1368-98) and partly in the Yongle 永樂 (1403-24). A further gift of two Chinese families was made in 1607. See Zhang Xizhe, "Cai Wen dui Liuqiu de gongxian," *Zhong-Liu lishi guanxi guoji xueshu huiyi lunwenji* (1), p. 310.

⁵ Hashi established the first Shô dynasty in 1406 after deposing the Chûzan king Bunei 武寧 (1396-1405). The second Shô dynasty, established by Shô En 尚圓 in 1470, lasted until 1879. By that time 97 Ryukyuan royal sons had studied at the Guozijian 國子監 (imperial academy) in Nanjing. See Wu Aihua, "Qingdai Rujia sixiang dui Liuqiu de yingxiang," *Zhong-Liu lishi guanxi guoji xueshu huiyi lunwenji* (1), pp. 82, 93-94, 99.

⁶ In the 15th and early 16th centuries, when Ryukyu trade and economy were flourishing, the king usually received investiture two years after his succession. Later kings had to wait from four to eighteen years. See Ta-tuan Ch'en (cited below), p. 136.

These manifold requirements of ritual propriety acted as a powerful incentive for the Ryukyu rulers to “Confucianize” their state and thus earn the respect and favor of the Chinese officials. This process was further stimulated by the fact that the Chinese envoys, usually highly educated civil officials with a strong commitment to Confucian learning, often spent many months in Ryukyu interacting with court officials and scholars while awaiting favorable winds for their return. As a major source of wealth to the kingdom, the success of the tribute missions was a matter of continuous and vital concern. Various legal violations and scandals perpetrated by members of early Ryukyu tribute missions had induced the Ming court in 1472 to limit the number of missions permitted to only one every two years, and the kingdom was extremely eager to obtain a relaxation of this restriction.⁷

Early in the reign of King Shô Sei 尚清 (1527-55), two successive *qingfeng* missions were sent to China. According to the *Liu-ch'iu's Chronicle of Successive Generations* (*Zhongshan shipu* 中山世譜, 1701),⁸ it was likely at this time (1528-59) that the king ordered the construction of a second gateway to the Shuri royal castle of the same scale as the existing “Chûzan Gate.” When the structure was completed, a tablet inscribed with the words “Awaiting the Bringers of Wisdom” (*dai xian* 待賢) was hung over the archway. Some years later, however, this tablet was changed to one which read simply “Shuri” 首里, or “head village.” In 1579 the investiture embassy for King Shô Ei 尚永 (r. 1573-88) presented the Ryukyu court with an edict from the Ming emperor which read:

You, the Liuqiu kingdom, dwell at the furthest limits of the sea. Nevertheless you earnestly exert yourselves to obey the teaching proclaimed by our Imperial Will, and have endeavored generation after generation to fulfil your proper duties as a tributary state. In this light, we deem you singularly worthy to be known as a land where ritual propriety is observed. (*Wei er Liuqinguo, yuan chu hai bin, ke zun shengjiao, shi xiu zhi gong, zu cheng shou li zhi bang* 惟爾琉球國，遠處海濱，恪尊聲教，世修職貢，足稱守禮之邦).

One can imagine the pride with which these words of imperial praise were received among those entrusted with the kingdom's welfare. Henceforth, before the arrival of each Chinese investiture embassy, the old “Shuri” tablet was taken down, and a new inscription reading “The Land where Ritual Propriety is Observed” (*shou li zhi bang*) was hung in its place. After the Chinese embassy had departed, however, the more prosaic “Shuri” tablet was again put back in its place.

⁷ For a chronology of the development and frequency of the tribute missions and investiture embassies, see Wu Aihua, pp. 83-93. For detailed accounts, see Ta-tuan Ch'en, “Investiture of Liu-ch'iu Kings in the Ch'ing Period,” and Robert K. Sakai, “The Ryukyu (Liu-ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma,” in John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order*, pp. 135-64 and 112-34.

⁸ The *Zhongshan shipu* (J. *Chûzan seifu*), which was open to perusal by the Chinese investiture envoys that came to the kingdom, recorded Ryukyu's relations with China, while relations with Japan were recorded in a separate supplement. See Ch'en, p. 159.

Tomari Jochiku and the Assertion of Japanese Suzerainty

In 1590, the year Hideyoshi 秀吉 unified Japan under his command, this developing relationship with China was threatened by a Japanese move to obstruct the continuation of the Ryukyu missions. The Ming court, beleaguered with its own internal problems, did nothing to defend the independence of its tributary, and before long the Japanese took a decisive step to assert their suzerainty over the Ryukyu region.⁹ Hideyoshi's campaigns in Korea in 1592 and 1597 had closed off direct trade routes between Japan and China. Shimazu Iehisa 島津家久 (1576-1638), the daimyo of Satsuma, was well aware of the wealth entering Ryukyu as a result of its advantageous entrepôt trading position between China, Southeast Asia, and Japan. Now, frustrated at not being able to trade directly with China, he petitioned Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1605 and 1606 for permission to send an expedition to Ryukyu to punish the kingdom's "disobedience."¹⁰ Satsuma could accuse Ryukyu of disobedience because of a tradition that Ashikaga Yoshinori 足利義教 (1394-1441), the sixth shogun of the Muromachi bakufu, had granted the Ryukyu territory to Iehisa's great-great-grandfather Tadakuni 忠國 in 1441. The "disobedience" or "insubordination" referred in this case to the king's failure to obey Hideyoshi's demand that Ryukyu contribute troops to his campaigns in Korea.¹¹

The bakufu approved Iehisa's request, and in 1609 Iehisa's forces entered Ryukyu with an army of 3,000, took control over the five northern islands of the Ryukyu archipelago, and proceeded to Okinawa, where they captured the Kume and Shuri castles.¹² Two months after setting out, they returned to Kagoshima with 100 captives, including the king (Shô Nei 尚寧; r. 1589-1620) and the members of the Council of Three (*Sanshikan* 三司官). The king and his advisors, however, were treated as distinguished guests, and in 1610 they were even taken to Ieyasu's home domain of Suruga 駿河 for an audience with Ieyasu, and then to Edo to meet the young shôgun Hidetada 秀忠. The king was finally allowed to return to Ryukyu in 1611, but only after signing an oath of obedience to Satsuma domain.¹³ One member of the *Sanshikan* was executed for his refusal to sign the agreements. In 1613 Iehisa issued an edict prohibiting Ryukyu from conducting its own relations with foreign countries, and sent officials to supervise the coming and going of ships at the port of

⁹ Satsuma had already attempted to assert authority over the Ryukyus in the 15th century. In 1472 the lord of Satsuma demanded that Ryukyu cease trading with ships from other countries, and in 1480 he instructed the king to send a tribute mission to the Muromachi bakufu. See Kikuchi Kenjirô, "Ryûkyû ga honpô oyobi Shina ni taiseshi kankei o ronzu," *Shigaku zasshi* 7.9 (September 1896): 784.

¹⁰ Zhang Xizhe (1987), pp. 307-08.

¹¹ Actually, at the time Satsuma had interceded on Ryukyu's behalf and had the requisition reduced to providing supplies rather than manpower. But the Ryukyu king was still not pleased, and he delayed the delivery of supplies, eventually delivering only half. Satsuma made up the shortfall, thereafter holding Ryukyu in its debt. See Sakai, p. 116.

¹² The five northern islands remain part of Kagoshima prefecture today.

¹³ The king was released from captivity only on condition that he observe fifteen regulations imposed by Satsuma stipulating Satsuma's control over Ryukyu's investiture, tribute, and trade relationship with China. See Sakai, pp. 117-18, and Zhang Xizhe (1987), p. 308.

Tomari. In 1621, after the death of King Shô Nei, he decreed that Satsuma's approval would henceforth be required for the accession of new Ryukyu kings, and in the next year that tribute missions to China would be limited to only one every ten years.¹⁴

These political developments were soon to be followed by attempts in the cultural sphere to bring Ryukyu under Satsuma influence. In 1632 a Buddhist priest by the name of Tomari Jochiku 泊如竹 (1570-1655) arrived from Satsuma bringing with him a set of Japanese editions of the Four Books and the *Great Compendium on the Book of Changes* (*Shûeki taizen* 周易大全). These were editions to which Jochiku's teacher, Nanpo Bunshi 南浦文之 (1555-1620), had added reading punctuation (*waten* 倭點) to enable reading according to Japanese word order and grammar. Bunshi was in turn a disciple of a Rinzai priest named Ichiô 一應, who belonged to the "Satsunan" 薩南 (southern Satsuma) lineage of Zen Confucian learning. This lineage had been founded in the Muromachi period by Keian Genju 桂庵玄樹 (1427-1508) after his return from six years of studying Confucianism in China.¹⁵ At the time of Keian's return from China in 1473, the capital was in turmoil with the Ōnin 應仁 War (1467-77), so he was unable to return to his home temple. From Iwami 石見 domain he made his way southward and westward, seeking patrons, until he was asked to teach Confucianism in Higo 肥後 domain in central Kyushu." Here, he was asked by the learned noble clan of Kikuchi 菊地 to perform an ancient sacrificial ceremony to Confucius known as *shidian* 釋奠 (Jp. *sekiten*, *shakuten*).¹⁶ Subsequently, Keian continued to perform the rite on the ritually prescribed dates, keeping alive a tradition which had fallen into desuetude in the capital.

In 1478 Shimazu Tadamasa 島津忠昌 (1463-1508) invited Keian to the Ryûunji 龍雲寺 in Satsuma, endowing him with his own temple (Tôinji 島陰寺 or Keijuan 桂樹庵) in the following year. Here, as Confucian tutor to the entire Shimazu clan, Keian set about revising *waten* editions of the Four Books and the Six Classics that had been compiled by an earlier Rinzai master, Kiyô Hôshû 岐陽方秀 (1361-1424). Since he was the first person to publish Japanese editions of Zhu Xi's "New Commentaries" on the Four Books, Keian has been regarded as the first

¹⁴ In return for all of these concessions, Ryukyu did obtain contractual assurance that the dignity of the royal family and the social and cultural autonomy of the kingdom would be preserved, and that the islanders would be protected against abuse by Satsuma representatives. See Sakai, pp. 118 and 122, and George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, pp. 160-62.

¹⁵ Keian had trained at the great Gozan monasteries of Nanzenji 南禪寺, Kenninji 建仁寺, and Tôfukuji 東福寺 in Kyoto. In 1467, he accompanied an official embassy to Ming China headed by the abbot of Kenninji, staying behind to study the *Book of History* at Hangzhou and Suzhou.

¹⁶ This ceremony, which dated from the Zhou dynasty in China, had been introduced into Japan in the eighth century. In China, the emperor himself would conduct the sacrifice to Confucius, while in Japan the Japanese emperor would watch his officials perform it. Its performance went into abeyance from the time of the Ōnin War, but in 1633 (Kan'ei 寛永 10), Hayashi Razan 林羅山 revived it in Edo, after which it was performed under bakufu sponsorship and with the shôgun in attendance once a year until the Kyôhô 享保 period (1716-36), and twice a year after that until the Meiji Restoration.

patriarch of Zhu Xi 朱熹 studies (Shushigaku 朱子學) in Japan.¹⁷ The rise of his school to a position of national prominence, however, had to wait for the work of Bunshi, during a time when the more successful of the *sengoku daimyô* 戰國大名 were becoming increasingly aware of the potential usefulness of Neo-Confucian political theory in their all-out struggle for regional and national supremacy.

Bunshi left Satsuma in 1569 to study at the Tôfukuji 東福寺 Temple in Kyoto. In 1573 he returned to Kyushu and entered his teacher Ichiô's temple in Ôsumi 大隅 domain (east of Satsuma). Subsequently, the Shimazu clan appointed him abbot of their chief Satsuma temple, Ryûgenji 龍源寺, later adding their head temples in Ôsumi and Hyûga 日向 to his charge. At this time Bunshi undertook a revision of Keian's edition of the Four Books. Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619) came into possession of a copy of this revised edition in 1596, when his ship was forced by heavy seas to abort a mission to China at Kikai Island 喜界島, halfway between Okinawa and Kyushu. Thus, while the fruits of Keian's and Bunshi's scholarship were making their way southward toward the shores of Ryukyu, they suddenly managed to arrive in Edo, the epicenter of Japan's military and political power struggles, shortly before the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603).

In 1599, while at the residence of Iehisa's father Yoshihiro 義弘, Bunshi came across a copy of the *Great Compendium on the Book of Changes*. Yoshihiro (1535-1619) and Iehisa had won great merit in 1588, during the second of Hideyoshi's Korean campaigns, by defeating the Ming army in the battle of Shisen 泗川. While in Korea, many of the Japanese military leaders had shown an interest in the country's official Neo-Confucian learning, and one of Yoshihiro's fellow warriors had brought this book back with him to Kyushu.¹⁸ The *Book of Changes*, based on the system of divination used by China's ancient kings in making strategic political and military decisions, occupied a position second only to the Four Books within the Cheng-Zhu 程朱 school of learning, and Bunshi resolved to produce a Japanese edition of this work as well. In the same year, having accompanied a Shimazu entourage to Kyoto, he received an imperial mandate to lecture on the *Great Learning* 大學 at Tôfukuji. In 1603, Iehisa sent Bunshi to Edo to enter a plea with Ieyasu for the life of a former confidant of Hideyoshi, Ukita Hideie 宇喜多秀家 (1573-1655), who had taken refuge with Yoshihiro after meeting defeat in the battle of Sekigahara 關ヶ原. Ieyasu, impressed with Bunshi's rhetorical skills, not only agreed to spare Ukita, but appointed Bunshi senior lecturer (*jôdô teishô* 上堂提唱) at Kenchôji 建長寺, head temple of the Kamakura Gozan 鎌倉五山. It was seven years before Iehisa managed to lure his favorite bonze back to Satsuma by making him founding abbot of his own temple, Dairyûji 大龍寺. Subsequently, Bunshi was entrusted with the task of composing most of his patron's state documents, letters, and diplomatic

¹⁷ In 1481 he published Zhu Xi's commentary on the *Great Learning*, *Daxue zhangju* 大學章句. In 1501 he wrote a work explaining his own distinctive method of Japanese reading punctuation, *Kahô waten* 家法倭點. See *Dai-Nihon shiryô*, 9:1, entry for Eishô 永正 5/6/15 (1508), Shinyashiki Yukishige, *Shinkô Okinawa issennenshi*, 1:545, and Tamamura Takeji, "Keian Genju," *Nihon rekishi daijiten*, 4:187.

¹⁸ Shinyashiki, 1:545.

communiqués, providing the cultural framework and knowledge of protocol required for the successful conduct of Satsuma's maritime-based trade.¹⁹

Bunshi's disciple Jochiku was from the island of Yakushima 屋久島, situated directly south of Satsuma. After studying Buddhism for a time in Kyoto, he returned south to take up Confucian studies under Bunshi in Kagoshima. In 1627 he had new printing blocks of Bunshi's edition of the *Great Compendium* carved. Five years later he embarked on his mission to Ryukyu, where he became tutor to the king (Shô Hô 尚豊; r. 1621-40) and his sons. The study of the Confucian classics in Ryukyu had hitherto been based exclusively on the Chinese mode of reading the texts. Now, by using Bunshi's editions as textbooks, Jochiku popularized the Japanese method of reading Chinese, establishing a second tradition of Sinological learning after the one centered in Kumemura that came to be known as *Shuri Kangaku* 首里漢學. The *Dai Nihon shiryô* 大日本史料, under the 13th year of Tempô (1842), states that Japanese *Kanbun* 漢文 reading subsequently replaced the Chinese everywhere except in Kumemura, where both readings continued to be taught.²⁰ This may be an exaggeration, however, since we know that Shuri was the center of the traditional aristocratic culture (tied in with Japanese learning) and that this aristocratic culture later lost out in its struggle against the Kumemura-centered Confucianization movement in the early eighteenth century. However, it is significant that a Confucianization of the Shuri aristocrats seems to have already been underway before the loosening of Satsuma's political control led to a rise in the fortunes of the Kumemura Sinologists. Jochiku's transmission of Japanese Confucian scholarship would likely have led in time to a more concerted effort to propagate Japanese ethico-political norms in the Ryukyu kingdom, but political and economic circumstances after the fall of the Ming dynasty worked in the direction of preserving Ryukyu's separate identity.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 546. Bunshi's relationship with Iehisa, that is to say, was similar to Hayashi Razan's relationship with the third shôgun, Iemitsu 家光 (shôgun from 1623-51).

²⁰ Ibid., p. 550. Ch'en (p. 163) also notes the remark of a Chinese envoy that many editions of the classics seen in Ryukyu were published in Japan, and that they often contained Japanese reign titles.

²¹ Sakai notes that "In general Satsuma does not seem to have tried to exert much influence on cultural and social affairs in Okinawa. Christianity, of course, was strictly proscribed, but certainly Satsuma did not take the attitude of the Chinese, that a tributary state should be in their cultural orbit. For political and economic reasons, the foreignness of the Ryukyu Islanders was emphasized.... Even the names of Ryukyuan were ordered changed in 1625 if they happened to be similar to Japanese names" (p. 127). This lack of effort at assimilation (in contrast to the policy followed in the five northern islands where genealogical records were confiscated and burned in 1706) was of course due to Ryukyu's special relationship with China. Gregory Smits points out that it reflected a deliberate policy arising out of the bakufu's fear that Ryukyu might become a point of military conflict with the Qing empire and out of Satsuma's desire to use Ryukyu to obtain inside information about China. See "The Intersection of Politics and Thought in Ryukyuan Confucianism: Sai On's Uses of *Quan*," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56:2 (Dec. 1996): 452-53.

Nevertheless, the period of Satsuma's direct control was long enough to allow some of the most basic policies of the Tokugawa bakufu to have a strong impact in the Ryukyu kingdom. In 1634 Ryukyu was incorporated into the *bakuhan* system of feudal administration.²² Accordingly, the official titular status of the Ryukyuan ruler was changed from king (*Chûzan-ô* 中山王) to provincial governor (*kokushi* 國司), and Satsuma delegated a consular commissioner (*ikoku bugyô* 異國奉行) to oversee administration. In 1647 a system of trade monopolies was established, and in 1654 an edict was issued instituting the strict status and occupational separation of the gentry (*shizoku* 氏族) from the peasantry.²³ In Japan the *shinô bunri* 士農分離 policy was a core element of early Tokugawa social policy--the foundation for building a status system designed to assure obedience to the shogunate and its vassals. One of the reasons for the appeal of Confucianism at this time was that its norm of a four-class social order could be used to legitimize this status system. In Ryukyu, the shift toward Confucianism may have been even more pronounced than in Japan itself, for in 1663 the royal government is said to have prohibited the preaching of Buddhism.²⁴ Shortly thereafter the government began an extensive institutional reform inspired by Confucian concepts.

Shô Jôken and the Clarification of Rank and Status

The gentleman who took charge of the design and implementation of this program was a talented historian and statesman named Shô Jôken (Xiang Xiangxian, 1617-75), also known by his Japanese name, Haneji Chôshû 羽地朝秀. In 1650 Shô had completed the ambitious task of compiling Ryukyu's first official history, *Chûzan seikan* 中山世鑑 (*Zhongshan shijian*). In chronicling the achievements of the

²² Satsuma conducted land surveys in Ryukyu in 1610 and 1611; in 1634 the Ryukyu landholdings were listed in the shôgun's registry as part of the holdings of the Satsuma daimyo. See Sakai, p. 119.

²³ See Itokazu Kaneharu, "Kinsei Ryûkyû ni okeru Shushigaku no juyô," in *Zhong-Liu lishi guanxi guoji xueshu huiyi lunwenji* (1), pp. 49-75. Some sources give the date of the edict as 1657 (see Itokazu, p. 73, n. 4). The occupational separation of the classes was modified in 1725 when Cai Wen issued an edict permitting members of the gentry to engage in commercial and industrial activities, a radical departure from traditional Confucian economic policy. In the Japanese context, of course, the term *shizoku* referred to the samurai class.

²⁴ This is a surprising contrast to the policy in Japan in this period, when under the *danka* system all Japanese families (except those of Shinto priests) were required to register with and give support to a Buddhist temple, making the Buddhist establishment a core element of the Tokugawa system of popular control. It is also impossible to imagine Buddhism being proscribed in China. The closest parallel would seem to be the anti-Buddhist institutionalization of Zhu Xi Confucianism in Korea. Of course, we should not assume that this policy was actually strongly enforced; Buddhism (along with Japanese literature) was an integral part of the culture of the traditional Shuri aristocracy, who naturally resisted the policy of Confucianization. It was not until the time of Cai Wen (1682-1761) that Buddhism and the Shuri aristocracy came under sustained ideological attack. See Smits, p. 467.

kingdom's founding fathers and expounding the principles of royal succession, he made full use of both Chinese and native written sources. Yet he used the Japanese calendar to put his genealogy in order, and referred to the Chûzan rulers not by their royal titles, but as *kokushi*. Composing the work in Japanese, he endeavored to imitate the style of Japanese historical narratives, and made special efforts to emphasize the historical, linguistic, and ethnic kinship between the Ryukyu people and the Japanese. For instance, he claimed that the founder of the first Ryukyu dynasty, King Shunten 舜天 (r. 1187-1237), had been fathered by Minamoto no Tametomo 源為朝 (1134-70), a warrior hero of imperial descent who had been banished by his father to Kyushu.²⁵

Appointed minister-regent (*sesshō* 攝政) in 1666, Shō spent the next eight years working to remold government and ritual practice to reflect the convictions regarding the rectification of names that he had developed in the course of his historiographical endeavors. The measures he implemented included the reduction of the influence of women in the royal court (directed against the shamanistic priestesses and their associates), the strict rectification of palace ceremonial and costume, the correction of abuses against the peasantry, the recognition of private ownership of reclaimed land, and the reexamination of clan genealogies. He also encouraged the study of Japanese arts and learning by making such knowledge part of the qualifications for official position. In spite of their wide scope, all of his regulations shared one fundamental objective: the clarification of rank and status, rooted in the Confucian conviction that each person has a hierarchically determined place in society and should be diligent in fulfilling the duties proper to that place. In the effort to realize this goal, Shō even went as far as to stipulate a different style and color of clothing for each of the four classes and kerchiefs of different colors for officials of different ranks.²⁶

The promulgation of the status-separation edict was also closely related to economic developments and their impact on society. The growth in trade with Satsuma after 1609, particularly Satsuma's use of currency to buy sugar cane, had brought about a rapid rise in the use of money. The lure of profits from the tribute trade had also led Iehisa in 1633 to permit the resumption of tribute missions at the former rate of one every two years. The increase in movable wealth served to attract the rural populace to the urban areas (*machikata* 町方) of Shuri, Naha, Tomari, and Kumemura, leading to a serious depletion of the rural population. As a result, signs of a disintegration of rural society and a decline in agricultural production soon began to appear, threatening the very basis of the economy.²⁷ The court's desire to put a stop to this migration was one of the major motivations for the status-separation edict, which also decreed the binding of the peasants to the land. Nevertheless, by dividing

²⁵ Shōken studied both the *Hōgen Monogatari* 保元物語 and the *Heiji Monogatari* 平治物語, both of which are accounts of the Hōgen Rebellion of 1156, a struggle between the Minamoto 源 and Taira 平 clans (each supporting different factions of the Fujiwara) that was won by the Taira. The former centers on the exploits in this rebellion of Minamoto no Tametomo whose prowess as an archer won him legendary fame.

²⁶ See Wu Aihua, pp. 100-01

²⁷ Itokazu (1987), pp. 51-55.

society into producers and consumers, the edict unintentionally stimulated the further growth of a commodity-based economy, as evidenced, for instance, by the sumptuary laws of 1661 and by the conversion in 1667 of labor service levies to a money tax. As a result, the court was compelled to continue to grapple with the migration problem for decades.

Meanwhile, the renewal of the tribute relationship was drawing the kingdom inexorably back into the orbit of China, which was enjoying a new burst of international power and prestige due to the rise of the Qing dynasty. In line with these realities, Satsuma persuaded the bakufu in 1655 to formally recognize Ryukyu's tribute relationship with China. Henceforth, whenever an investiture embassy was about to arrive in Ryukyu, all the Satsuma ships would leave the harbor at Naha for the northeastern port of Yuntiangan (Untenkô 運天港), and Satsuma officials stationed in Naha would conceal themselves outside the city.²⁸ After the "*Shou li zhi bang*" tablet was rehung on the Shuri gate in 1663 for the investiture of Shang Zhi 尚質 (r. 1648-68), the king decreed that this inscription should remain in place as a permanent reminder of the kingdom's special relationship with the Celestial Court. This epithet, indeed, was perfectly fit to subsume the function of the "Shuri" tablet as well, since the pronunciation of Shouli 守禮 and the name of the city 首里 were identical in both Chinese and Ryukyuan. It must have been a great pleasure for the king and his Confucian-educated advisors to contemplate the significance of this fortuitous coincidence in name of conventional (local) and ideal (universal) realities as they proceeded in their task of translating imported Chinese norms into functioning domestic institutions.

The next king, Shô Tei 尚貞 (r. 1669-1709), carried this process of sinification one step further when, in 1678, he established a new position of Confucian tutor (*jiangjieshi* 講解師) to the king and the heir apparent. This post was designed to be filled by scholars from Kumemura, in place of the Buddhist and Confucian teachers from Satsuma who had previously been entrusted with the task of royal education. It was only these privileged native sons, fully educated in both the Chinese and Ryukyuan languages, who possessed a knowledge of political concepts and traditional status nomenclature sufficient to put the kingdom's genealogical records in order. The momentum of this resurgence of Ryukyu's cultural ties with the mainland continued, attaining full recognition in 1712 when the shogunate finally permitted the

²⁸ Zhang Xizhe (1987), pp. 308-09. Untenkô was situated on the eastern coast of the Motobu peninsula, facing away from China. As for Ryukyu voyages to China, on the other hand, Sakai notes that "every trip made by Ryukyuan to China was carefully supervised by han officials, and the captain, crew, and official passengers pledged to observe faithfully the disciplinary regulations and conduct themselves according to careful instructions" (p. 132). These instructions included the stipulation that questions by the Chinese bearing on Ryukyu's economic relationship with Satsuma should be answered by feigning ignorance. Ch'en (pp. 162-63) quotes the remark of a Chinese envoy to the effect that, "It is said that Liu-ch'iu is not far away from Japan, and the two countries always maintain trade relations. However, the Liu-ch'iuans shun this subject very carefully, as if they had no knowledge at all of the existence of that country." Ch'en notes, however, that the envoys never reported the deception to the Chinese court, and concludes that they never became aware of the extent of the kingdom's subordination to Satsuma.

king to reassume his traditional title of *Chūzan ô* (*Zhongshan wang*).²⁹ By restoring a title that, in the powerful language of Confucian political terminology, signified legitimacy, centrality, and autonomy, this accession by Japan to the rectification of names unequivocally signalled the end of the period of Satsuma's direct rule.

Cheng Shunze and the Intermediary Role of Ryukyu

In 1714 the seventh shogun, Ietsugu, summoned a Ryukyu prince (the prince of Kin 金武) to Edo to attend the ceremonies surrounding his installment as shōgun. At the same time he summoned another Ryukyu prince from Satsuma (the prince of Yona-gusuku 世名城) to offer gratitude to the bakufu for the accession of King Shō Kei 尚敬 (r. 1713-51). The ensuing Ryukyuan mission was headed by an accomplished scholar of Chinese named Cheng Shunze 程順則 (1663-1734), known in Edo as Miyasato *pêchin* 宮里親雲上.³⁰ Shunze was a scion of one of the original 36 Chinese families of Kumemura. In the year Shunze was born, his father, Taizuo 泰祚, had accompanied the first Qing investiture embassy back to China, where he stayed for two years. In 1671 Taizuo and Shō Jōken had petitioned the throne urging the establishment of a Confucian temple in Kumemura, and Taizuo was subsequently commissioned to supervise the temple's construction.³¹ Taizuo sailed for China again in the following year with a tribute mission, but unfortunately died of illness in Suzhou in 1675 at the youthful age of 42.³²

Shunze, however, was well prepared to carry on in his father's footsteps. He had excelled in Chinese learning from a young age, showing a particular passion for painting and poetry. In recognition of his learning, in 1683 he was named official interpreter (*tongshi* 通事) to accompany a royal thanksgiving mission to Fujian. There he stayed behind to further his studies under a poet named Chen Yuanfu 陳元輔 and a Confucian scholar named Zhu Tianzhi 竺天植. Upon his return in 1687 he was appointed tutor to the throne. Two years later he was sent back to China to study Neo-Confucianism and investigate Chinese institutions while serving at the Ryukyu legation in Fuzhou. During this two-year stay, he purchased, at his own expense, a complete 1,592-volume set of the seventeen dynastic histories, which he presented to the Confucian temple upon his return. Subsequently, Shunze made three further journeys to China, in the years 1696-98, 1706-08, and 1720-21. With the tribute mission of 1696 he travelled from Fujian to the Chinese capital Yanjing (Beijing), where he continued to associate with eminent Chinese poets, scholars, and officials. He recorded his experiences during the eight-month journey to and from the capital in

²⁹ Itokazu (1987), p. 60.

³⁰ *Pêchin* is a Ryukyuan royal title, translated by Sakai as "junior elder."

³¹ Upon the temple's completion in 1674, the king personally went to offer worship to Confucius and decreed that henceforth the royal sons must offer incense there on the second day of every new year. Worshipping at the Confucian temple became a standard practice among the Ryukyuan gentry. A second Confucian temple was built in Shuri in 1837, followed by the opening of new schools to promulgate Confucian learning. The worship of Confucius was finally prohibited by the Japanese in 1910. See Wu Aihua, pp. 100-01 and 107.

³² See Zhang Xizhe, "Cheng Shunze duiyu Zhong-Liu wenhua jiaoliu de gongxian," *Zhong-Liu lishi guanxi lunwenji* (2), pp. 1-2.

a series of 83 poems, under the title *Xuetang Yanyou cao* 雪堂燕遊草 (Collection of Cheng's Poems Written during His Trip to Beijing; Kyoto, 1714) a work that became a classic of Ryukyuan literature. Through this and other writings, Shunze became much emulated as a Chinese-style poet not only in his native Ryukyu, but in Japan as well.³³

Of the many Chinese books Shunze presented to his hosts in Japan, the most influential was a work called *Liuyu yanyi* 六諭衍義 (J. *Rikuyu engi*; *Expanded Explications of the Six Injunctions*). The "six injunctions" were the first six of 41 doctrines promulgated in 1397 by Ming Taizu as fundamental moral principles to be taught to the common people. They consisted of the virtues of obedience to parents, respect for elders, building harmony and concord in the village, education of the young, contentment with one's livelihood, and the eschewing of rebellious behaviour. The *Expanded Explications*, written by a late-Ming teacher named Fan Hong 范鋐 for use in giving popular Confucian moral sermons, expounded the advantages of practicing the six injunctions in the light of historical instances of good and bad recompense. Because of its purpose, it was written in a style far removed from the classical language, filled with local colloquialisms and dialect. This work was widely circulated in China from the early Qing. In Shunze's time, however, Confucian scholarship in Japan was still directed primarily to the upper levels of the samurai class, and such popular writings were just beginning to attract attention.

In 1708 Shunze had the *Expanded Explications* printed at his own expense at the Ryukyu legation in Fujian in order to take it back to Ryukyu. During his sojourn in Japan he presented a copy to Shimazu Yoshitaka 吉貴. In 1714, when the eighth shōgun, Yoshimune 吉宗, asked Yoshitaka for information regarding government and literature in the Ryukyus, Yoshitaka offered him this book. Yoshimune promptly commissioned the prominent Shushigaku scholar Muro Kyûsô 室鳩巢 (1658-1734) to write an explication in Japanese, but Kyûsô felt compelled to decline the request because of the unusual difficulty of the language. The shōgun then turned to the great Edo Sinologist Ogyû Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1729), directing him to add *waten* to make the work more comprehensible. Sorai had held conversations with Shunze during his stay in Edo, and was pleased to accept the assignment. Upon completion of his work, Kyûsô was again directed to undertake the job of Japanese explication. Kyûsô's commentary (*Rikuyu engi taii* 六諭衍義大義, 1722) was later widely republished in the various domains to be used as a textbook in the numerous schools for popular education established during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Edo, Shunze had also befriended the great Confucian historian and shogunal advisor, Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725), during the period of Hakuseki's greatest political influence (1709-16). As a result, Hakuseki's geographical works *Nantô shi* 南島史 (Accounts of the Southern Islands) and *Sairan igen* 采覽異言 (a five-volume study of world geography, history, and culture, 1725) owe a portion of their rich content to information provided by Cheng Shunze.

Through a petition to the Ryukyu throne, Shunze also succeeded in having a school of Chinese studies founded in Kumemura in 1719. Called the "Hall of Ethical

³³ Ibid.

Enlightenment” (Mingluntang 明倫堂), the school used the eastern and western wings of the Confucian temple as its classrooms. At this time the royal capital was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the embassy for the investiture of King Shō Kei. The chief ambassador of the previous embassy (in 1683) had suggested that an educational facility should be provided at the Confucian temple in Kume. The founding of the Mingluntang thus appears to have been part of an all-out effort to gain favor with the Qing officials in the hopes of further strengthening the tributary relationship with China, now at a high point of its dynastic glory under the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662-1722). Indeed, at this time the entire economic and cultural energy of the Ryukyu Kingdom was being mobilized to present the most opulent and grandiose reception for the Chinese ambassador that had ever been mounted. This reception, while it bankrupted the treasury, was instrumental in stimulating an unprecedented flourishing of Ryukyuan arts and scholarship which has become known among historians as the “Ryukyu Renaissance.”

Cai Wen and the Institutionalization of Confucianism

In spite of Cheng Shunze’s achievements in disseminating the culture of his ancestors, however, the full-scale institutionalization of Neo-Confucianism in Ryukyu had to await the appearance of a scholar less devoted to literature for literature’s sake. Cai Wen (Sai On, 1682-1761) was the son of a Ryukyuan gentleman adopted into a Kume family for lack of an heir.³⁴ Thus, like Shunze, he was immersed in Chinese learning from an early age. At the age of 25 he was appointed tutor to the throne.³⁵ Two years later he was assigned as “resident tribute interpreter” (*jingong cunliu tongshi* 進貢存留通事) to the Ryukyu legation in Fuzhou and enjoined to devote himself to the study of statecraft and geography.³⁶ While in Fuzhou he supplemented his practical economic studies by receiving five months of instruction in Confucianism from an unidentified gentleman known as “the recluse of Huguang” (*Huguang yinze* 湖廣隱者), who is believed to have been a follower of the Wang Yangming school.³⁷ We learn about his encounters with this teacher from Cai’s autobiography, written after his retirement at age 76. When the recluse asked him about the state of scholarship in Ryukyu, he relates, Cai replied with pride that all of the major Chinese classics and philosophical books were available in his country, and that the writing of Chinese prose and poetry was as much loved there as in the land of its origin.

³⁴ Cai’s father, Cai Duo 蔡鐸, had served both as tribute emissary and as governor of Kumemura (*zongli tangying si* 總理唐營司). He was noted for two important works on Ryukyu genealogy and history, one of which was a translation of Shō Jōken’s history. See Zhang Xizhe (1987), pp. 309-10.

³⁵ Following the chronology given in Zhang Xizhe (1987), pp. 325-32.

³⁶ Geography = *dili* 地理. As Yamazato Nagayoshi points out in *Okinawa rekishi monogatari*, p. 222, in this case this meant the principles of managing and developing waterways, forests, and other economic resources.

³⁷ Some evidence of the influence of the Yangming school can be seen in the fact that, as noted below, the focal point of Cai’s philosophical inquiry was based on the old version of the *Great Learning* promoted by Wang Yangming. See Zhang Xizhe (1987), p. 311 and Maeda Yoshimi, *Sai On: denki to shisō*, pp. 160-71.

Unimpressed, the master replied that this type of literary activity was still a far cry from true learning. To forget that the *raison d'être* (*benti* 本體) of the classics and philosophical writings lies in ethical self-cultivation and the proper governing of the state (*cheng yi, zheng xin, zhi guo* 誠意, 正心, 治國), and instead devote all one's attention to writing and poetry, he insisted, is to be farther from the Way than even an ordinary peasant.³⁸

Cai returned to Ryukyu in 1710. In the next year he was appointed secretary (*zhangshi* 長史) to the king and tutor to the heir apparent. When his pupil took the throne in 1713 as King Shō Kei, a new position was created for Cai as "state teacher" (*guoshi* 國師).³⁹ Two years later he had conferred upon him the honored rank of *zheng yidafu* 正議大夫 (chief minister of diplomacy), a title that Cheng Shunze had also received eight years earlier. Cai's successes in *qingfeng* negotiations with the Qing court in 1717-18 and with the ensuing *cefeng* mission of 1719 brought him even greater honors, including a commission to teach the king the proper Chinese rituals for receiving the Qing ambassadors. In 1728 Cai was made a member of the Council of Three, being the first Chinese descendent to hold such an elevated position since the Satsuma invasion 124 years before.⁴⁰ In this powerful administrative post, which he held concurrently with the title of "state teacher" until 1752, he was able to put into practice many of his ideals of government, making fundamental contributions to his country's economic development and administrative restructuring. He is particularly remembered for his reforms aimed at strengthening the agricultural base of the economy and for his waterworks engineering and afforestation projects.⁴¹

As in the case of Shō Jōken, Cai's public service career was grounded in meticulous historical scholarship. In 1724 he had begun the crucial task of revising the *Genealogy of the Chūzan Kingdom*, his father's Chinese translation of Jōken's *Chūzan sekan*. His preface, addressed to the king, reflects a concern for establishing a Confucian definition of the duties of a ruler as sage-king.⁴² Elsewhere, he bemoans

³⁸ Paraphrased in Shinyashiki, 2:123. Also quoted in classical Japanese translation in Itokazu (1990), pp. 2-3.

³⁹ Okinawa rekishi kenkyūkai, ed., *Sai On senshū*, p. 98.

⁴⁰ Zhang Xizhe (1987), p. 312. Zhang notes that, since the Satsuma invasion, Chinese descendants from Kume were prohibited in principle from serving in the king's government. This prohibition dated from the aforementioned execution of one of the *sanshikan* (a Chinese from Kumemura) by Shimazu Iehisa in 1611 for his unwillingness to cooperate with the Satsuma authorities. A member of the *sanshikan* was second in rank only to the minister-regent.

⁴¹ One of Cai's first acts as minister of state was to further refine the system of ranks and titles by increasing the number and clarity of distinctions. Thus, it would seem that, in spirit, his reforms were a direct extension of those of Shō Jōken and arose from similar motivations. For a summary of Cai's achievements and a list of his writings, see Zhang Xizhe (1987), pp. 313-20.

⁴² Itokazu argues that the Satsuma incursion shook the traditional shamanistic foundation of the king's rule, casting doubt on the divinity of the king and on the efficacy of the shamanistic spells which had assured the blessings of the gods upon his reign. This collapse of the authority of the gods freed the king to begin to think in a more rational and man-centered way, and to begin to conceive the kingdom's territory and populace, as well as the tasks of government, concretely and

the fact that hitherto local government has been unstable and unpredictable, to the detriment of the people's welfare, because of military competition between petty lords and the lack of fixed status demarcation between commoners and gentry. He particularly deplored the fact that traditional Ryukyu society lacked a system of surnames, posthumous names, and other status-defining titles, resulting in different people being recorded under the same name and the same people being recorded under different names, to the distress of those trying to put in order the genealogical records. Using typically Confucian terminology, Cai complains that this made it impossible to distinguish between the true and the false, the historical and the legendary, the legitimate and the illegitimate.⁴³ It is this awareness of the relationship between names and social order that propelled him to devote himself to putting the historical records in order, to make manifest the true meaning of loyal action (*taigi* 大義) through a meticulously correct apportionment of names and status distinctions (*meibun* 名分).⁴⁴ This was the same endeavor that Confucius himself pioneered in his writing of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the classic that lies at the root of the Confucian historiographical tradition.⁴⁵ Cai Wen's genealogical project provides about as clear an illustration as one could wish for of the motivations and implications behind the Confucian doctrine of "the rectification of names," and of the social roots of this doctrine in the ancient practice of reverent remembrance of one's ancestors.

In Ryukyu, as in China and Japan, Confucian learning contributed a great deal to the formation of the ritual, conceptual, and normative framework for human interaction and political decision-making among the official class, although shamanism continued to play an important ritualistic role, particularly at the popular level. Being centered on reading and writing, Confucian learning also cultivated a commitment to the value-generating enterprises of poetry, history, and philosophy, fostering a set of gentlemanly ideals expressed in a concern for the material and spiritual welfare of the common people. As elsewhere, this moral imperative worked to promote the development of education in Ryukyu, as evidenced by the institution of a centralized system of academies in 1790, and the establishment of village schools between 1824 and 1835.⁴⁶ However, while the ideal of universal enlightenment certainly existed within Confucian philosophy, the establishment of a broad-based system of popular education had to await the incorporation of Ryukyu into the prefecture system of Meiji Japan from 1879.⁴⁷

analytically. Cai argued against the vestiges of the magical or religious conception of kingship in favor of a rational, functional model. Itokazu (1987), pp. 51, 58-61.

⁴³ Shinyashiki, 2:126.

⁴⁴ The clarification of *taigi* (lit., "the supreme duty") and *meibun*--namely, the clarification of the moral principles that apply to people in particular status relationships--is considered the core purpose of the writing of history in the Zhu Xi school in both China and Japan.

⁴⁵ While 20th century scholarship has called into doubt the tradition that Confucius wrote the *Chun-qui*, this was an unquestioned article of faith in the Confucian tradition.

⁴⁶ Robert K. Sakai and Sakihara Mitsugu, "Okinawa," *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 6:86.

⁴⁷ Ch'en (p. 163) notes that it was only in 1875, when Japan ordered Ryukyu to stop sending tribute to China and Ryukyu petitioned China for help, that the Chinese court realized that Ryukyu

Epilogue

But before we jump into the Meiji period, what became of our friend, the Reverend Bernard Bettelheim? Actually, in spite of the rather inhospitable treatment he received, he managed to stay in Okinawa for over eight years. British warships called at Naha in 1850 and 1852 in hopes of motivating better treatment, but they were not successful. Though his evangelization efforts were faced with unrelenting obstruction, he was more successful in introducing Western-style medical care to the Ryukyuans. His efforts to introduce vaccination are said to have won him some genuine appreciation, especially among the poor. Probably the most significant of his achievements, however, were a study of the Ryukyuan language that he completed in 1849 and his translations of the Four Gospels into Ryukyuan, completed in 1852. In the spring of 1853, Commodore Perry stopped at Naha before proceeding on his historic mission to Japan. Here he compelled the local authorities to treat him with respect and insisted that the regent entertain him officially in the royal palace, conduct that is said to have helped convince the bakufu leaders in Edo that concessions to the Americans would have to be made.⁴⁸ Bettelheim left Ryukyu in July of the next year with Perry's fleet of 1854, bound for Shanghai where he hoped to publish his translations. Before long, however, he left China for the United States, where he remained for the rest of his life. Here, while continuing his work on the Japanese language and on a Japanese translation of the Gospels and the Book of Acts (published posthumously in Vienna in 1873-74), he also offered himself as a mediator between the United States and Ryukyu.

It was in 1872--two years after Bettelheim's death, that the Meiji government annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom. This was the year after 54 shipwrecked Ryukyuans were massacred by aborigines in Taiwan. To punish the perpetrators (and appease the hawkish samurai faction in the Meiji government), the Japanese sent a punitive expedition to Taiwan in May 1874, commanded by Saigō Takamori's younger brother, Tsugumichi (1843-1902). This precipitated a diplomatic crisis with China because of her long relationship with Ryukyu as an important tributary state. The Qing court settled the dispute by paying an indemnity to Japan, thus tacitly recognizing in Western eyes the Japanese claim to the Ryukyus.

While at first there was strong opposition to the Japanese annexation among Ryukyuan conservatives, especially those of high position with close ties to China, it does not seem to have given rise to any widespread and lasting resistance. Undoubtedly the two and a half centuries of actual and nominal Satsuma suzerainty had helped create a political and ideological foundation for the annexation. The Japanese Neo-Confucian texts that Jochiku promoted in Shuri represented essentially

had been a vassal of Satsuma since 1609. He explains this ignorance by observing that the Chinese court generally paid little attention to the internal and external affairs of its tributary countries.

⁴⁸ J. K. Fairbank, E. O. Reischauer, A. M. Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp. 200, 202. Ch'en (p. 158) notes also that during this 1853 landing Perry established a coaling station for the American navy and forced the Ryukyu government to sign a treaty guaranteeing good treatment for American vessels.

the same system of classical learning that was established in Kumemura, based on the same canonical texts. Over the long run, under the pressure of pragmatic economic interests, this fact must have facilitated a rapprochement between the two educated elite communities that formed the pool of Ryukyu political leaders. Indeed, in spite of its peripheral geographical situation, the Ryukyu Kingdom had become direct heir through these Confucian texts and their commentarial traditions not only to the system of concepts and symbols surrounding the center of political power in imperial China, but also to the spiritual lineage that sanctified the very core of the Tokugawa feudal system in its founding period. The potentiality of these two traditions to come together in the building of the Ryukyuan state is aptly symbolized by the joint petition of Cheng Taizuo and Haneji Chôshû in 1671 for the establishment of a Confucian temple.

If the tendency toward such a meeting of minds between the purveyors of Japanese and Chinese learning was already established in the seventeenth century, then we might regard the conflict in the early eighteenth century between a group of prominent Shuri literati and Cai Wen's Confucianization program as a sort of aberration. After all, it was not a matter of Satsuma supporting Cai's opponents against a "Chinese" faction in the Ryukyu government, for Satsuma was strongly behind Cai's program of reform. The conflict ended in the execution of fifteen of Cai's opponents in 1734, an event known as the Hishikiya-Tomoyose Incident.⁴⁹ With the opposition faction crushed, Cai was able to put through even the more ambitious of his reforms without obstruction, suggesting that after the incident most of the rest of the Shuri aristocracy put themselves behind his leadership. From that point on they must have become more and more Confucian in their outlook. It was another 138 years before the Meiji annexation, but perhaps it is not too bold to suggest that this pragmatic tradition of drawing together the best of both Japanese and Chinese learning for the building of the state may have helped prevent the emergence of a sustained force of opposition to Japanese rule. Aside from the fact that resistance would have been futile anyway, we should remember the fact that the Restoration and the annexation were accompanied by quite a bit of Confucianist rhetoric that would have appealed to the Ryukyuan leaders, and the fact that since the Opium War there was a growing perception in East Asia that China was no longer the center of the world.

As in Japan, in Ryukyu in the seventeenth century we see the mantle of educational leadership pass from the tonsured Buddhist cleric to the Confucian man of letters. Concomitantly, we see the focus of educational endeavor shift away from providing religious support to personal--and thus "impermanent" (*wuchang*; *mujô* 無常)--authority structures, toward the building and securing of stable bureaucratic institutions through the fixing of status distinctions.⁵⁰ In Ryukyu, this shift toward

⁴⁹ See Smits, pp. 468-69.

⁵⁰ As we have seen, this early Tokugawa transition from Buddhist to Confucian learning was not as sharp as it is often portrayed, because of the fact that it was the Zen monks--the intellectuals *par excellence* of the Muromachi period--who first developed a lineage of Song Confucian learning and first began preaching its values to the leaders of Japan's *bushi* establishment.

civil as opposed to *bushi* learning corresponded naturally with a shift of the balance back toward China as the source of the political, ideological, and economic foundations of the kingdom. But that shift only increased the importance of Ryukyu to Satsuma, especially since the Japanese ruling class was going through a period of unprecedented enthusiasm for Chinese learning. In the case of Cheng Shunze, the kingdom's close contacts with both China and Japan (while direct contacts between China and Japan were closed) made it possible for a Ryukyuan scholar to transmit some of the newest trends in Chinese learning directly to Edo before they could arrive through the traditional Korean door, and thus to interact on an equal footing with some of the greatest of contemporary Confucian scholars in Japan. Cai Wen, on the other hand, who did not have a very active relationship with Japan, represented the peak of the swing of institutional orientation back to China after the period of direct Satsuma rule.⁵¹ With no other outlet for what he had learned in China, his energies became focused on pursuing the implications of this knowledge for his own country and translating these implications into the realm of practical statesmanship. His efforts, undertaken with a deep sense of Confucian moral purpose, did much to bring to maturity the kingdom's consciousness of itself as an autonomous, though subordinate, state within a world order largely defined by Neo-Confucian ranks and ritual standards.

It is small wonder, perhaps, that Bettelheim was unable to make much of an impression.

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⁵¹ Smits (p. 456) notes similarly that "he [Sai On] and his supporters substantially altered the ideological and ceremonial basis of the state, shifting from rites derived from Japanese and Buddhist examples to rites based on Chinese and Confucian practices."

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