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## Confucian Thought during the Tokugawa Period

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## Confucian Thought during the Tokugawa Period

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### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the Tokugawa Period (1603–1868 A.D.), the School of Chu Hsi was respected as the orthodox school of Confucianism. However, from the middle of the 17th century, questions and criticism were raised by Nakae Toju, Yamaga Soko, Ito Jinsai and Ogyu Sorai, all of whom attempted to establish new theories. Although their theories reflected various other differences, they shared one common attitude or approach in that they all tried to deny the most basic proposition in the school of Chu Hsi, "*Hsing is Li*". (*Hsing* is original or true nature of the human heart, and *li* are moral rules or their original principles governing one's mode of social living.) To say these two are identical means that moral principles are inherent in the true nature of man; therefore people innately possess the ability to judge behavior as morally sound or not on the basis of the original nature of their hearts.

Different though they were in their tenets, what was common to all the above-mentioned scholars is that they denied this basic proposition of the Chu Hsi School. This denial seems to be related to a fundamental difference between the Chinese and Japanese family system. Whereas the Chinese family is purely a paternal kinship organization, the *ie* as a unit of social organization in Japan is not always based on true kinship, but rather displays the characteristics of a fictive corporate organization formed to preserve a family name by artificially insuring the succession to family business so as to maintain its prosperity. A person does not qualify as a member of society just by being born into a family. Rather he can become a full member of society only after achieving a proper position in an *ie* structure. In China, on the other hand, a boy born into a family automatically receives the rights and obligations of a family member. These become the basis of his social activities, and it is up to each person individually to choose an area of activity.

This difference is probably one of the reasons why the Japanese have lacked a concept of individual morality and why the theory of Chu Hsi, which forwarded this characteristic of individualism, met resistance in Japan. Japanese scholars imbued with the notion of *ie* as an integral group, and the state as an aggregate of *ie*, sought to explain the true basis of morality lies in role performance within such units.

## HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Confucianism as a major system of thought and knowledge in pre-modern Japan underwent tremendous development during the long and peaceful Tokugawa Period (1603–1868 A.D.). Accompanying Confucianism, per se, was *kokugaku* 国学 a study of the “Japanese” classics, and such branches of natural science as mathematics and medicine. However, those pursuing other forms of knowledge were not completely free from Confucianism, which was the mainstream of Chinese literary learning. *Kokugaku*, for example, was strongly influenced by Confucianism in its method of study, and in the process of establishing itself as a system of thought took Confucianism as its thesis to create an antithesis. Other sciences, like medicine, were largely dependent on Chinese materials until the end of the 18th century, the time when western learning was introduced into Japan through the medium of Dutch. In particular, many scholars and philosophers used the Confucian classics as their basic material for the contemplation of social morals and political issues. On the one hand this promoted the scholastic understanding of these texts, and on the other helped the formation of a Japanized Confucian thought that indicated desirable states of morality and politics adjusted to the Japanese context. This provides important material for historical research, in that it reflects the sense of life of the people who lived during the Tokugawa Period.

The reason that Confucianism gradually replaced Buddhism, which had been the mainstream of thought until the middle ages (ca. late 12th century—15th century), seems to be the fact that the social structure of this period shared some similarities with the centralized bureaucratic system in China [Birto 1968]. The last half of the 16th century—the Oda-Toyotomi Period (1568–1600 A.D.) just prior to the establishment of the Edo Shogunate by the Tokugawas in 1603—saw the foundation of a new unified regime with the warriors or *samurai* as the executors of political power.

The bureaucratic structure of the nation, which had been established around the seventh century being modeled after the T'ang system for which the social foundation was still premature, rapidly changed its nature and shifted to a system in which major members of the national power structure, such as the nobility, large temples, various government offices and even the imperial family itself, used the *shōen* 荘園 system—the land owning system that allowed large private holdings based on the division of national power—as their economic basis. This shift undermined the administrative ability of the central government. To complement this situation warriors or *samurai*, who had power in local communities, emerged and gradually increased their power within the central government, starting around the end of the 12th century. The *shogun*, or leader of the warriors, established a military government in Kamakura. The centralizing power of the nation further deteriorated in the course of political and military disputes between the court nobility and the warriors, and between various alliances among the warriors. On entering the period of continuous wars, known as the *Sengoku* 戦国 Period, from the end of the 15th century to the 16th century, the warriors' regimes that had by then emerged in many places deprived the nobility of

their power-base by abolishing the *shoen* system, which had heretofore provided the warriors themselves, as well as the nobility, with an economic foundation. Instead, they mobilized political power to govern their local areas. This was the *daimyō* system. By aligning these local powers with themselves the Toyotomi and Tokugawa families re-established centralized power in the nation. In the process of this unification the *samurai* were gradually separated out from the farmers throughout the country [Brito 1981]. The warriors were called in to live in the castle towns which were their lords' headquarters. Thus they lost direct contact in governing the rural areas and became somewhat similar to bureaucrats. A similar centralizing shift can be seen operative among the lords acting as administrators. This centralizing shift is the main reason why Confucianism—the orthodox learning for the ruling class in China—became of interest to the warriors, the *shogun* and *daimyo*. Confucian social thought was something they could refer to when thinking about their own lives or about ways of government.

While the social mode of existence of the warriors came to share certain characteristics with that of the Chinese bureaucrats, it was something that naturally emerged from Japanese society through a long historical process. Thus, throughout this time Japanese social life displayed many characteristics that remained unique to the Japanese context. For example, the structural relationships between the *shogun* and the *daimyo* and between the *daimyo* and their retainers were feudalistic in nature, in that the *daimyo* and the retainers were obligated to extend a military service in exchange for a fief that they received from the *shogun* or the *daimyo* respectively. This master-retainer relationship remained hereditary. Such feudalistic relationships were not found in China, but they are similar to what appeared in European feudalism to a degree. A basic difference from the European model was due to the fact that the retainers who served a *daimyo* were regarded as members of the *daimyo*'s clan, reflected in such terms used in reference as *kachu* 家中 or *kashin* 家臣. Japanese type feudalism cannot be fully understood without referring to the human relationships based on the *ie*, a notion or institution unique to Japan. The internal social structure and human motivational relationships of classes other than the *samurai*, such as farmers and townspeople (i.e., merchants and craftsmen who were living in cities), were also based on the institution of *ie*. The differences between the Japanese and the overall Chinese social structure as illustrated above, must have limited the extent of Japanese acceptance of Confucianism, and must have stimulated thinking as to how Japan could adjust Confucianism to Japanese society.

Another condition that made it difficult for Confucianism to be accepted unreservedly was that there was no institutional foundation to make Confucianism a necessary education for administrators. In China, the bureaucrats were chosen on the basis of examinations, a basis for institutional Confucianism since at least the Sung Dynasty. In Japanese *samurai* society one's ranking was first determined on the basis of military capability, ranking was then passed on through generations, and there was very little room for something like the Chinese examination system.

During the first half of the Tokugawa Period there were only a few schools in

*daimyo* territories (*han*) to educate *samurai* in any organized manner. It was only after the middle of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th that more schools were set up by the *han* or the Edo shogunate. This indicates that in the earlier part of the Tokugawa Period it was not necessary for the *samurai* to study Confucianism, and those who had a special interest in learning, or those who wanted to be scholars, studied Confucianism individually. However, since the early period many of the higher administrators, like the *shogun* and *daimyo*, following the traditions of the ancient nobility, valued Confucian education, and appointed Confucian scholars as their private teachers. In this sense, therefore, it could be said that studying Confucian thought was useful for acquiring a position, but that the position was not an administrative one, unlike that which would be obtained by passing the examination in China. Rather it was a scholar's position, which was irrelevant to actual politics. Confucianism in the Tokugawa Period, therefore, was something that developed under very different social conditions from those prevailing in China.

### INDIGENOUS RESPONSES TO THE TENETS OF CHU HSI

The main stream of Confucianism during the early period of Tokugawa was the school of Chu Hsi [Brito 1961]. The circle was a small one, consisting of a few professional scholars. Its scholastic standards were relatively high, having inherited the traditions and fruits of learning from the aristocratic society of ancient times as well, as drawing upon the active Chinese scholarship pursued in the Zen temples during the medieval periods.

The first Confucian scholar to be appointed by the Edo shogunate was Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657 A.D.). Razan was at first a monk at the Kenninji 建仁寺, a Zen temple in Kyoto. In 1604, when he was 22 years old, he became a pupil of Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561–1619). Razan presented a list of Chinese books that he had read by then, which included 440 titles, to Seika. Seika himself was a member of a noble family and had studied at a Zen temple, the Shokokuji 相国寺.

There were two reasons Seika and Razan devoted themselves to the school of Chu Hsi: first, the theories of Chu Hsi incorporate many influences from Buddhism, mainly the Kegon 華嚴 sect, which was relatively easy to understand not only for Zen priests but also for the ordinary people of the post-medieval period, who had been under the strong influence of Buddhism. Second, in contemporary China (the Ming Dynasty) and Korea (the Yi Dynasty) the school of Chu Hsi was respected as the orthodox school of Confucianism, and was the standard used for the examination system. During the medieval period the Zen temples had served as windows through which Chinese and Korean cultural features continued to be introduced. Therefore, it was natural for the priests to accept the Chu Hsi school as orthodox.

It is commonly believed, that the school of Chu Hsi was adopted as an official discipline by the Edo shogunate after Hayashi Razan received an official appointment. But this is contrary to the facts. Tokugawa Ieyasu appointed Razan simply as a secretary for literary affairs because he recognized that Razan was very learned,

and not because he accepted the value of the school of Chu Hsi or understood the content of Razan's thought. This sort of appointment was not unique to Ieyasu, but, rather, was quite common among the administrators of the shogunate and local han during the early Edo Period. Therefore, the vogue enjoyed by the school of Chu Hsi among the scholastic circles does not necessarily mean that it had any strong direct connection with the political powers.

As the school of Chu Hsi became popular it also began to stimulate questions and criticism. The important thing here is that criticisms were raised not by scholars and educators, who simply accepted the theory of Chu Hsi, but by those who attempted to understand it through actual experiences as functioning members of society [Birto 1961]. The first of such criticisms was raised by Nakae Toju 中江藤樹 (1608–48 A.D.), who abandoned the school of Chu Hsi and switched to “Yomei gaku” the school of Wang Yang-ming. Following Nakae, from around 1662, Yamaga Soko 山鹿素行 (1622–85 A.D.) and Ito Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705 A.D.) independently began to question the thought of the Chu Hsi School and attempted to establish new theories of their own. Although the content of their theories differed [Birto 1968, 1971], they shared a common attitude or approach, in that they both tried to reach back to the original spirit of Confucianism (or so they believed) by reading such classics as *The Analects* themselves, without depending on the commentaries by later scholars, like Chu Hsi. Later Ogyu Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728 A.D.), who was active in the early 18th century, also advocated a similar procedure of study [Birto 1979]. Sorai, along with Yamaga Soko and Ito Jinsai, are often referred to as *kogaku* 古学 or the Old Learning. *Kogaku* is a school of Confucianism that developed independently in Japan, although one might find similarities to the school of textual explication of the Ch'ing dynasty. One of the differences is that whereas the *kogaku* group tried to read and understand the original meaning of the classics without the assistance of any commentaries, the Ch'ing scholars relied heavily on the earlier Han period commentaries in order to understand the classics.

It can easily be imagined that passages of the ancient classics are prone to various interpretations. This possibility may have become even more exaggerated when Japanese scholars, for whom Chinese was not the native tongue, read them without any commentaries. They must have found a great deal of room for free interpretation. In fact, the main advocates of the *kogaku* school were proud of the objectivity of their interpretation of the classics compared to those by the school of Chu Hsi, which were regarded as strongly subjective. Although Jinsai and Sorai accomplished much in the area of objective study of the ancient language, their systems of thought as a whole remained undeniably Japanese.

Thus *kogaku* was formed through criticising the thought of Chu Hsi. One can also observe modifications or Japanization of the thought of Chu Hsi by changes in the emphasis given his system. Such modification was apparent among the faithful followers of the school, one of whom was Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1618–82 A.D.) and his associates.

That such criticism or modification of the school of Chu Hsi had taken various

shapes before the end of the 17th century seems to indicate that the thought of Chu Hsi contained some characteristics which could not be adapted, readily or entirely, to the reality of Tokugawa society. In the following section I would like to compare some Japanese modifications with Chu Hsi's teachings in order to examine their characteristics. (Parenthetically, Japanese Confucianism after the 18th century can be understood, for the most part, as a composite of or further development of, the various schools of thought to which I have just referred.)

The essence of the thought of the school of Chu Hsi is expressed in the basic proposition—"nature is principle" 性即理. *Hsing* 性 is the true nature of the human heart (original nature), and *li* 理 are the moral rules or their original principles in terms of social life. It follows that to say these two are identical means that moral principles reside in the true nature of man, and therefore an individual innately possesses the ability to judge whether behavior is morally sound or not on the basis of the natural inclination of one's heart (mind). We can understand this theory as implying respect for an individual's independence or autonomy in regard to morals. However, it would be an ideal situation for an individual to be able to carry out such a perfectly autonomous life. In order to reach such a state one should make a continuous effort to clarify the true nature of one's own heart. There is, in fact, a necessary effort to inquire into the question of what is the principle in one's heart; therefore one gives heed to the so-called "penetrating principle" 窮理. The actual procedure operative in the "penetrating principle" is that of "investigating phenomena" 格物 as appears in *The Great Learning*, that is, it is necessary to investigate the *li* of each phenomenon thoroughly. The *li* of each phenomenon can be interpreted as the principle of various acts of individual social behavior. For example, a person, as a lord, establishes a lord-retainer relationship with his retainers, and as a father maintains a father-son relationship with his children. In this manner one establishes relationships with others depending on one's role in society, and it is considered a morally just way of life to carry out what is appropriate in each social relationship. It is thought that there exists a principle that governs how one should "be" in each relationship, such as lord-retainer or father-son. In other words, principles that govern moral behavior are highly situation-specific. Because they are situation-bound they are diverse in content. When, however, they are traced to an original principle, they turn out to be simply its particular manifestations. The reason for this unitary base is that principles for moral behavior, after all, derive from the *li* of each individual's heart. As a performer of behavior, one exhibits concrete manifestations of the *li*. In the terminology of the school of Chu Hsi this is expressed as "the principle is unitary, the manifestations are particular," 理一分殊 (that is, although the *li* is one, its manifestations in each specific situation are diverse). In order to master the principles of moral behavior in all its variety one must follow the teachings of the ancient sages and other predecessors and submerge oneself in the patterns of model behavior. This discovery of precedent is "investigating phenomena." Training itself is heterogeneous. It is the diverse means through which one can experience the principles of moral behavior. Furthermore, with the accumu-

lation of particular experiences “understanding will suddenly dawn on one,” 一旦豁然貫通 (*Supplement of The Great Learning*) that is, the time will come when one’s view becomes completely clear and all the abiding principles of moral behavior become self-evident. This is the perfected state of the “penetrating principle”, by which one perfects the moral personality that allows him automatically to perform, morally just acts on his own initiative under any circumstances. Sages are those who have reached this stage, which any one can reach through effort. This is what is meant by the Chu Hsi school when they say “all men can become sages.”

Such an emphasis on respecting the autonomy and equality of individuals in the logical structure of the school Chu Hsi was its strong point over the other schools. At the same time, however, in reality it could not avoid confining people to a way of life that forced them to follow the social norms, by demanding very strict training in “investigating phenomena”. Furthermore, the intellectual self-control demanded often accompanied the suppression of one’s natural emotions and desires; all of these weak points are well-known.

These shortcomings were often the target of criticisms of Chu Hsi made by such people as Lu Hsiang-shan 陸象山, Chu Hsi’s contemporary, and Wang Yang-ming of the Ming Dynasty in China. The same type of criticisms were to be found in Japan as well. However, it should be stressed that criticism of Chu Hsi by Japanese scholars went beyond pointing out such shortcomings and came to include denying the basic theory of the school of Chu Hsi itself.

Nakae Toju had the clearest understanding that the main issue of the theory of the school of Chu Hsi lay in the respect of the individual’s autonomy in regard to morals, and he tried to practice it faithfully. In his *Okina Mondō* 翁問答 (1640 A.D.) [BITO 1961] he states: “if the luminous virtue of one’s heart is clear, the judgment as to what ought to be done in a given situation comprising time, place and social position (時處位), one’s responsibility as a person, one’s fate and other things, all become as clear as if they were reflected in a mirror.” He also elucidated that it is an ideal state for a person to live autonomously, free from moral formalities.

Toju practiced this free way of life himself: when he was 27 years old he left his position as *samurai* in Ozu 大洲 Han, Shikoku, without his lord’s permission, and returned to his native farm village in Omi (Shiga Prefecture). This act is also his actualization of the Chu Hsi school teaching that one should respect “departing and residing, advancing and retreating” 出處進退; and that when one should serve a lord he should do so, and other times he should be among the people. Toju was also faithful to the teaching of “investigating phenomena”: while he was serving as a *samurai* he performed his duties as a retainer faithfully, and when he went home he served his mother earnestly. Despite all this, however, he could not attain peace of mind, and he suffered psychologically. At the age of 37 he encountered Wang Yang-ming’s writing and became a faithful follower of his tenets. However, his thought during the last four years of his life came to differ from that of the school of Wang Yang-ming. He sought only “peace of mind” and abandoned his previous interest regarding the ideal state of behavior in society. These features of his latter



thought one must judge as rather strongly Buddhistic in nature. The path taken by Toju's thought suggests that he failed to carry out the "penetrating principle" in the manner advocated by the school of Chu Hsi. Although he devoted himself to the school of Chu Hsi, regarding it as a theory that provides a way to reconcile the discrepancy between autonomous individual behavior and that considered socially just, he nevertheless failed to realize such theory in his own life and was forced to retreat to a hermit-like existence in the end. Toju's efforts did not die out however. His ideals were carried on by his student Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山, and by Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 who began his study of Confucianism by reading Toju's *Okina Mondō*.

That aspect of the Chu Hsi school that respects the autonomy of an individual remained influential to some extent, since it was similar in some aspects with traditional spiritual attitudes held by *samurai*. However, the fact that Toju, who wrestled with the theory squarely, failed to reconcile the "individual" and his social role in coping with the various social conditions of the time, eventually gave way to further criticisms of the school of Chu Hsi among the next generation of scholars.

What is common to the scholars of *kogaku*, such as Yamaga Soko and Ito Jinsai, is that they all deny the basic proposition of the Chu Hsi school that *hsing* is indeed *li*. As Soko defined the *hsing* of man's heart, it is innately irrelevant to moral good or evil, but is simply equipped with an ability to "know", that is, the ability to recognize things and matters objectively. What one ought to "know" using this ability is that one should master the principles of "things" and "matters" following "the investigation of phenomena and pursuit of knowledge" 格物致知 in *The Great Learning*. The *li* of things and matters are rules that define the ideal relationships between various people in society, which is what Chu Hsi argues as well. What is different between Soko and the Chu Hsi schools is that whereas Chu Hsi maintains that the rules of various patterns of behaviors are the manifestations of one *li*, which is expressed in "the principle is unitary, the manifestations are particular", Soko sees no need to contemplate the one *li*, and the objects of recognition are solely the rules of diverse human relationships. When a person masters the rules, he can obtain a standard of judgment as to how one should live as a lord, as a retainer, or as a father or a son, according to "the station" given to him. This is, to Soko, what learning is and what a man should know. Furthermore, as is well known, this was the underlying guideline for compiling the *Buke Jiki* 武家事紀, which is essentially an encyclopedia for *samurai*. This work stresses that *samurai* should respect their professional responsibility and teaches *bushido* 武士道 or the way of *bushi* as the norm for everyday life. It is also a compilation of what was considered necessary knowledge for a *samurai*, such as military affairs and history.

Similarly, Jinsai also denies the proposition "*hsing* is *li*", and states that morals do not wait upon the existence of particular individuals. They exist in themselves; that is, they exist whether a person exists or not [BITO 1968]. (Dojimon 童子問, part 1, chapter 14.) Jinsai indicates that the nature (*hsing*) of a person's mind is simply specific to an individual whereas morals are social properties; therefore, the

latter cannot be deduced from the former. Like Chu Hsi, Jinsai also accepted Mencius' theory that nature is good, and acknowledged that the nature (*hsing*) of human mind is innately equipped with a possibility or a tendency toward good. However, it is merely a possibility and he does not consider that man's nature (*hsing*) is completely equipped with moral principles, as Chu Hsi averred. Therefore, after one's birth, education is regarded by Jinsai as a necessary medium through which one learns what morals are. Morals here mean the norms that men must observe as long as they are social beings, which is expressed as "morals do not exist outside man, and man does not exist outside morals." (*Ibid.* pt. 1, ch. 8.) This might seem contradictory to the previous statement that "morals" exist independently of man. "Man" here, however, is defined as "lord-retainer, father-son, man-wife, brothers and friends," which suggests that "man" is a being who assumes a role in a specific social relationship.

Jinsai, however, is not interested in diverse relationships themselves, as Soko was, but focuses on "benevolence". This may seem to indicate that Jinsai, like the Chu Hsi school, also lays the basis of morals in the function of man's heart. The definition of "benevolence" 仁 by Jinsai, however, is simply "love" 愛, while it is "the principle of love" 愛之理 in the school of Chu Hsi. The significance of this difference can be clarified through Jinsai's notion of "benevolence".

The perfected form of "benevolence" is: first, one's heart is filled with compassion; second, the other(s) will receive "benefit and favor" as a result of his love. "One's heart is filled with love" probably means that only other people's welfare occupies his mind. Furthermore, "benevolence" is very close to "empathy" 恕. He states: "when one performs what is 'empathy' on an occasion, he will gain in 'benevolence' at the same time." (*Dojimon*, pt. 1, ch. 58.) "Empathy" is "to surmise an other's feelings", that is, when one associates with someone, he has to surmise what the other person likes and dislikes and tries to understand him by, as Jinsai puts it, "taking his feelings as your own and taking his body as your own." (Gomojigi 語孟字義, Shu 恕) Beautiful as this is, it has to be pointed out that this teaching of love and tolerance lacks a view of humanity that ties the self, as the performer of love, to the other.

In the school of Chu Hsi "empathy" is defined as "to project one's self" 推己 which is, as explained by the words of *The Annalects*: "one should not do things to others that he himself does not like to have done to him." Jinsai does not accept this interpretation. That is to say, Jinsai's teaching of love and tolerance can be summarized as an act of serving others with an awareness of his position in relation to them, or performing one's role in relation to others. It is different from love and tolerance in the sense that self and others are equal individuals. An act of love emerges out of love for oneself or on the basis of one's feeling consideration for others appears.

Opposed to Jinsai, who focussed on how an individual's state of mind should be (as did the school of Chu Hsi in that sense), Ogyu Sorai shifted his focus to how *society and state* should be from perspective that emphasized how society affects an

individual's attitude toward life [Bito 1979]. Sorai defined "nature" as something that contains the ability to love, to be friendly and to afford mutual support as well as an ability to perform some task of social utility. This latter ability manifests great variety because each individual differs in his social utility, depending on his personality and his talent at birth. And it is only harmful, not beneficial, to control this diversity by the uniform teaching of morals. "Rice is useful as rice and beans are useful as beans." (Tomonsho 答問書). Therefore, it is necessary for individuals as well as for the society as a whole to create the social conditions that allow people to demonstrate their relative abilities. And this is a question of politics and not of morals. Therefore, "the way" 道, Sorai advocates does not refer to morals but to the way to govern in order to realize a peaceful society.

More concretely, "the way" is represented in the form of various political institutions, or "rituals, music, punishments and institutions of government" 禮樂刑政, these were established by the sages who were the ideal lords in ancient China. Therefore, to Sorai, learning is to study what "the way" is through reference to the Chinese Confucian classics. "The way" is something that was created from the viewpoint of politics for the society as a whole, and is not something that can be judged in terms of the minds of individuals. This implies that the theory of the school of Chu Hsi, the principle of "the way" lying in the *li*, that is, "nature" of one's mind, is incorrect.

Thus *kogaku* scholars like Soko, Jinsai and Sorai denied the proposition of the school of Chu Hsi that "nature" is "principle", and Yamazaki Ansai, who succeeded the school of Chu Hsi, modified the thought of Chu Hsi by shifting the emphasis from "penetrating principle" to "reside in reverence" 居敬. "To reside in reverence" or to continue to be in the state of "reverence" means to bring one's mind under control and to maintain a state in which one's mind is concentrated, which is valued as a precondition to performing "penetration of principle" in the school of Chu Hsi. But Ansai explains that "residing in reverence" accomplishes all of one's moral training, by which he tried to teach a way of life, through "investigating phenomena" without utilizing the "penetrating principle", that is, one should unconditionally devote oneself to given social expectations.

Different though they may be in their approach, what is common to all these scholars is that they all deny a basic proposition of the Chu Hsi school. If this is a characteristic of Japanese Confucian thought generally, to what can we ascribe the reason? I would now like to consider this shift in Confucian thought in Japan by relating it to the traditional form of the family.

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY IN JAPANESE CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

Except for some minor historical changes, the Japanese family as a social institution did not change in its basic characteristics from about the eighth century on. The system of *ie*, discussed in detail by Yanagita Kunio [1963] and Ariga Kizaemon [1967], was already the prevalent system in eighth-century Japan

[NAKADA 1943]. Nakada noted that in the Japanese legal system, which was based on the T'ang legal system, some amendments were made in regard to inheritance. This view is carried further and developed by such scholars of legal history as Ishii Ryosuke [1980] and Shiga Shuzo [1967], whereas the Chinese family (as well as the kinship group) is purely a paternal kinship organization, the *ie* as a unit of social organization in Japan is not always based on kinship, but rather displays the characteristic of an artificial social organization ostensibly formed to preserve the family name and to insure successful succession of the family business and its property. It is possible for a non-kin to succeed the *ie*. There are even cases where the legitimate son of the head of the household is given none or a very small part of the right to succeed to the family business or property. The condition requisite to being regarded as an appropriate heir is not the fact of birth, but the possession of unique individual qualities appropriate to a satisfactory continuity of the business. It was obviously an advantage to be born as the first son, which is part of such uniquenesses, but it is not an absolute asset. There have been many cases where the first son loses his position to his younger brothers or to non-kin members. When the *ie* is prosperous either at the present or likely to be in the future, it is passed on in parts, normally in uneven parts, with an emphasis on the main house. This is an effort to maintain the family name and business through the main household.

Under such a system of *ie* a family based on kinship is simply a building block to the construction of an *ie*. Furthermore, a person does not acquire the qualifications of a member of the society by just being born as a family member. He can be a full member of society only after assuming a position in an *ie* structure by some route, be it becoming the successor of the head or the protégé of the *ie*, creating a new *ie* using a small inheritance, or becoming a subordinate (often called a *kenin* or *kerai*) of another *ie*.

In China, on the contrary [BITO 1968], a boy born to a family is given rights and obligations as a member of the family, which becomes the basis of his social activities. They do not have the notion of family business, and it is up to each individual to choose an area of activity. The results of the activity, however, become the family asset shared by the family as a cooperative body consisting of his father and his brothers. After the death of the father the male siblings have the right to divide and inherit the asset with absolute equality. The obligation as a member of such a cooperative body is understood as his obligation to obey his father, its representative. This is expressed by *hsiao* 孝. This, however, does not mean to obey people in higher positions as it is often misunderstood, but it probably meant to respect the relationship where an individual is respected as a human being and not by virtue of his ability or qualifications. Such a relationship, they considered, appeared first between a father and a son. The moral system that is unique to the Chinese in which *hsiao* is the basis of all morals can be understood only in this context.

*Hsiao* is a foreign loan-word in Japanese. Since there was no comparable native Japanese word there is only a Sino-Japanese reading *ko* for this even today, which implies that the original meaning of *hsiao* was a difficult one for the Japanese to

grasp. Tsuda Sokichi, who was a prominent scholar of the history and thought of East Asia, argues [TSUDA 1938], (Chapter 1) that the reason the Chinese people regard *hsiao* as the basis of morals is because they view all morals as based on the relationship between individuals. He also contrasts this with the Japanese view where there is more emphasis placed on an individual's relationship with the group than on those between individuals.

Tsuda's point was that the Japanese concept was more "modern", and the Chinese concept was considered to be inferior. I would rather infer, however, that the Japanese lacked a concept of morals based on the individual. Furthermore, one can say that because the theory of the school Chu Hsi espoused an individualistic characteristic, that is, the principle of morality is contained in each individual's "nature", it met resistance in Japanese culture which constrained scholars to use the notion of *ie* as a group, or the state as a composite of *ie*, to explain that the basis of morality lies in the performance of one's role.

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