

INTRODUCTION: NEO-CONFUCIANISM AND TOKUGAWA DISCOURSE

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Modern scholarship on the intellectual history of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) can be said to have begun with the work of Maruyama Masao. In 1940 the then-young Maruyama published the first of three essays on Tokugawa political thought in the *Kokka gakka zasshi* (Journal of the Association of National Scholarship). Tracing the ideological roots of Japan's modernity, Maruyama's work charted Tokugawa thought in an altogether new fashion. In 1952 the University of Tokyo Press published the essays as a single volume, and the significance of the work continued to grow, as attested to by Albert Craig's declaration in 1965 that, "All who write on Tokugawa thought must at some point ask themselves how their work relates to Maruyama Masao's . . . *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*."¹

With the appearance of an English translation of Maruyama's work in 1974 (*Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*),² Craig's statement may be truer than ever,³ but the field has grown more complex, and Maruyama's name no longer stands quite so alone. The work of such scholars as Robert Bellah,⁴ Wm. Theodore de Bary,⁵

¹ Marius Jansen, ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 155.

² Trans. Mikiso Hane (Princeton University Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press).

³ More recently, Tetsuo Najita and Irwin Scheiner have written that Maruyama's work "remains the key reference point for all serious discussions of Tokugawa intellectual history." In Tetsuo Najita and Irwin Scheiner, eds., *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. xi.

⁴ *Tokugawa Religion* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), and "Baigan and Sorai: Continuities and Discontinuities in Eighteenth-Century Japanese Thought," in Najita and Scheiner, *Japanese Thought*.

⁵ With Ryusaku Tsunoda and Donald Keene, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); with Irene Bloom, eds., *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning* (Columbia, 1979); and *Neofascist Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (Columbia, 1981).

David Earl,⁶ George Ellison,⁷ Harry Harootunian,⁸ Tetsuo Najita,⁹ and (most recently) Richard Rubinger¹⁰ in the West, and the researches of such scholars as Abe Yoshio,¹¹ Bitō Masahide,¹² Haga Noboru,¹³ and Minamoto Ryōen¹⁴ in Japan, as well as the analyses of those scholars represented in this volume,¹⁵ have made Tokugawa thought more accessible and intelligible than ever before. One finds represented in their work and that of others a broad range of methodological and interpretive approaches that attests to the richness of this field.

The intellectual history of the Tokugawa period has been intimately identified from start to finish with the orthodox Neo-Confucian mode of thought, by which I mean the thought of the philosopher Chu Hsi (1130–1200) in China and of those later followers and interpreters in China, Korea, and Japan who regarded themselves as part of an elaborate and complex intellectual lineage which they traced directly to the master. Like the other papers in this volume, this introductory essay emerges from a conference on responses to Neo-Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan held at St. John's University and is concerned as much with the broad range of responses and reactions

⁶ *Emperor and Nation in Japan: Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964).

⁷ *Deus Destroyed, The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

⁸ *Toward Restoration: The Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), and "Ideology as Conflict," in T. Najita and J. V. Koschmann, eds., *Conflict in Modern Japanese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

⁹ "Restoration in the Political Thought of Yamagata Daini (1725–1767)," *Journal of Asian Studies* 30 (1971): 17–29; "Political Economism in the Thought of Dazai Shundai (1680–1747)," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31 (1972): 821–839; "Intellectual Change in Early Eighteenth-Century Tokugawa Confucianism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34 (1975): 931–944; with Irwin Scheimer, eds., *Japanese Thought*; and with J. Victor Koschman, eds., *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*.

¹⁰ *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
¹¹ *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965), and *Jukyō no henshin to genkyō* (Kazankai, 1977).

¹² *Nihon hōken shisō-shi kenkyū* (Aoki Shoten, 1961); comp., *Ogyū Sorai, Nihon no Meicho*, no. 16 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1974); with Katō Shuichi, eds., *Arai Hakuseki*, NST, vol. 35 (Iwanami Shoten, 1975); and with Shimazaki Takao, eds., *Andō Shōeki, Saichū Nobuhito*, NST, vol. 45 (Iwanami Shoten, 1977).

¹³ *Chihōshi no shisō* (Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1972); *Yonaoshi no shisō* (Yuzankaku, 1973); and *Bakumatsu kokugaku no kenkyū* (Kyōiku Shuppan Sentā, 1980).

¹⁴ *Tokugawa gōri shisō no keifu* (Chūō Kōronsha, 1972); *Nihon kindanka to kinsei shisō* (Nihon Bunka Kaigi, 1976); *Edo no shisōkatachi* (Kenkyūsha, 1979); and *Kinsei shoki jitsugaku shisō no kenkyū* (Nihon Bunka Kaigi, 1976).

¹⁵ See List of Contributors, pp. 267–268.

to Neo-Confucianism in the Tokugawa era, and what might arguably be regarded as responses to those very responses, as it is with Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism per se. This question of the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa discourse is by no means a simple one, and just as the work of recent decades has served to refine our understanding of Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa thought, the essays in this volume challenge numerous commonly held assumptions on the subject, calling attention to responses to Neo-Confucianism in heretofore uncharted regions of the vast map of Tokugawa thought. They are, in this sense, part of an ongoing process of refinement, and it is hoped that they will serve to stimulate future advances in this inquiry.

Early Japanese chronicles state that Confucianism was introduced to Japan in A.D. 285 during the reign of Emperor Ōjin when Wani of Paekche brought copies from his native Korea of the *Analekts* of Confucius (C., *Lun-yü*; J., *Rongo*) and the *Thousand Character Classic* (C., *Ch'ien-tzu wen*; J., *Senjimon*), a Confucian primer. Though the actual date of this event may have been a century or more later, it is equally likely that Confucian teachings were known by at least some of those immigrants from the continent who were reaching Japanese shores in increasing numbers at this time. The Confucianism to which the Japanese were first exposed already represented more than the humble, ethical teachings of Confucius and his followers. Over the centuries, those teachings had been overlaid and, to a certain extent, obscured by a complex set of correlative doctrines that combined to form an entire cosmology and were drawn from the Taoist and Yin-yang schools that had influenced ethico-religious practice in China.¹⁶ However, for a variety of reasons Confucianism was eclipsed both in China and Japan by the doctrines of Buddhism which, particularly in Japan, were linked first to an aestheticism that enchanted courtly circles and later to a popular appeal that captured the faith of a broad audience.

Confucianism appears to have left its mark on Japanese society with its concern for hierarchical relationships and its emphasis on harmony within the home as the basis for harmony in the state, but equally plausible is the argument that in most instances Confucianism merely reinforced and justified social practices that had their antecedents in the pre-Confucian era. Prior to the Tokugawa, most Japanese were attracted more to the superstitious overlays of Confucian rites and practices than to the philosophical and ethical nucleus. Chinese

¹⁶ Tsunoda et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 1:54.

diviners were thus routinely consulted over such matters as building homes, selecting auspicious dates for travel or marriage and other similar activities, but Confucian advice on how to run the state or on how to regulate the affairs of man was largely ignored.

Aware of similar tendencies in China, and concerned over the relative strength of Buddhism, Chu Hsi transformed Confucianism and reinvigorated it as an intellectual discipline. He rejected the exegetical practices of his predecessors in the T'ang (618-907) dynasty and stressed the importance of studying the Way of the Sages as expressed in the Four Books: the *Analects*, the *Mencius* (C., *Meng-tzu*; J., *Mōshi*), the *Great Learning* (C., *Ta-hsüeh*; J., *Daigaku*), and the *Mean* (C., *Chung-yung*; J., *Chūyō*). In order to structure his thought, he developed a qualified monistic ontology that interpreted reality in terms of a singular natural principle (C., *li*; J., *ri*); and in order to guide the individual he counseled the methods of first the investigation of things (C., *ko wu*; J., *kakubutsu*), by which he meant the contemplation of one's physical environment with the aim of understanding the role of principle in it, and second the exercise of seriousness and reverence (C., *ching*; J., *kei*).

The joy of the Chu Hsi mode of thought was that it was both scholarly and spiritual: while it emphasized the quasi-scientific examination of the external world, it nonetheless provided for the development of the individual mind, recognizing the spiritual dimensions of such development. In this latter respect, Chu Hsi drew fruitfully from the teachings of Ch'an (J., Zen) Buddhism, but by transforming both the ends and the means, he made of it a genuinely Confucian doctrine. Regrettably, Chu Hsi's emphasis on seriousness at times lapsed, at the hands of his successors, into a humorless and dull tone far removed from those expectations that had inspired Neo-Confucianism in its earliest stages.

The Chu Hsi mode of thought was introduced to Japan in the early thirteenth century, perhaps as early as 1200, the year of Chu Hsi's death. For the most part, the philosophy was institutionally housed for nearly four centuries within Zen monasteries where it was regarded as a stimulating mental exercise that if properly directed, might point one toward the same truths as Zen. During these centuries, Zen enjoyed the patronage of the succession of military elites who ruled Japan, and since there were numerous similarities between the two modes of thought, Zen advocates were quick to assert that such Chu Hsi contemplative practices as "holding fast to seriousness and sitting quietly" (C., *ch'ih-ching ching-tso*; J., *jikei seiza*) were less developed stages of what they knew as "sitting in meditation" (C., *tso-ch'an*; J., *zazen*).

Chu Hsi's philosophy enjoyed a brief period of favor at the imperial court in the early fourteenth century during the reigns of Emperors Hanazono (r. 1308-1318) and Godaigo (r. 1318-1339), and emperors and shoguns alike summoned scholars to lecture on Confucian topics at intervals throughout the medieval period. Several thousand students, many of them Zen monks, attended the non-eclesiastical Ashikaga Academy (*Ashikaga gakkō*) where they studied a Neo-Confucian curriculum. Nonetheless, Neo-Confucianism did not achieve independent status during these centuries and remained in the shadow of its Buddhist patron.¹⁷ However, since the Chu Hsi philosophy originally arose as a rational alternative to Buddhism, the possibility of a rupture between these two modes of thought always existed, and it was out of that rupture that the Chu Hsi philosophy came into its own in Japan. The rupture began with the introduction of texts representative of new developments within Neo-Confucianism which the Japanese obtained during their invasion of Korea in the 1590s, and it was more or less complete by the time the first Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), appointed the leading Chu Hsi advocate to his retinue in 1605.

The rapidity with which the major themes of medieval Japanese discourse are replaced by the new themes of Tokugawa discourse is impressive; yet one must acknowledge that the transformation is no less rapid or striking than the concurrent political transformation. During the space of little more than half a century, the Japanese polity was transformed through the efforts of three great empire builders—Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu—from a loose confederation of semiautonomous fiefdoms into the more centralized feudal system that distinguishes the Tokugawa as Japan's early-modern state. Where the predominant concerns of the medieval period had dealt with such Buddhist themes as human suffering in the world, and the quest for personal salvation or enlightenment, the discourse of the Tokugawa was concerned more with the achievement and maintenance of a stable and harmonious society, placing the responsibility for maintaining that delicate equilibrium at the heart of both man and the cosmos squarely

¹⁷ On the Ashikaga Academy (*Ashikaga gakkō*), see Wajima Yoshio, *Chūsei no Jūgaku*, Nihon Rekishi Shōsho, no. 11 (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1965), pp. 226-261. Gidō (1324-1388), adviser to Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (shogun, 1368-1393), was typical of medieval authorities on Neo-Confucianism who felt that while Buddhism could include Confucianism, Confucianism could not include all that Buddhism had to offer. On Gidō and Yoshimitsu, see George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1334-1615* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 161-166.

on the shoulders of man. Seventeenth-century discourse was characterized by the presence of a well-developed humanistic political discourse absent in the thought of the sixteenth century, and this discourse drew fruitfully from the assumptions and vocabulary of Neo-Confucianism for its descriptions of man and his society.

Our understanding of the nature of this transformation has changed as a result of recent research. Where it had once been assumed that the Neo-Confucianism present in early-seventeenth-century Japan was virtually identical to the original formulation of Chu Hsi, it is now understood that the pioneers of Neo-Confucian thought in Tokugawa Japan drew as much from Yi dynasty (1392-1909) Korean interpretations and Ming dynasty (1368-1644) Chinese interpretations of the Chu Hsi orthodoxy as they did from the original teachings of Chu Hsi; and where it had once been thought that Neo-Confucianism enjoyed a near-hegemonic role in the formulation of this new discourse, Herman Ooms makes apparent in the next essay in this volume that Neo-Confucianism was just one, though still a most important, ingredient in it.

Neo-Confucianism appears at the very start of the Tokugawa era as one of several modes of thought which are of use to the bakufu for its political purposes. While its long incubation during the medieval period did not result in the appearance of any Japanese Neo-Confucians of stature, the interval was sufficient for the thought to prepare for its larger role. Thanks to the official recognition that Neo-Confucianism would receive during the first Tokugawa century, however qualified that recognition may have been, Neo-Confucian thought would rapidly gain broader acceptance in Japanese society and culture, both politically and intellectually. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that Confucianism had traditionally been directed toward precisely those issues which were now of immediate concern at all levels of Tokugawa society. Nonetheless, no single intellectual tradition would be privileged in Tokugawa Japan with exclusive government support, as had been and remained the case in China.

What is perhaps surprising is the extent to which Neo-Confucianism appears in tandem with Shinto and Buddhist elements in the new discourse. As Herman Ooms suggests in this volume, the Tokugawa bakufu was never at a loss for ideologues prepared to propagate affirmative teachings on man and society. Where Neo-Confucianism was prepared to provide arguments constructed from principles linking the terrestrial order to the cosmic, traditional Shinto, particularly its Yoshida denomination, was equipped to provide that element of

mythification so useful in obfuscating the historical wellsprings of Tokugawa power.

In the Buddhist camp as well, one finds articulate spokesmen who, while not directly under the influence of Confucian thought, nonetheless addressed those same concerns of social order and ethical life toward which Neo-Confucianism had been directed. Such attempts on the part of leading Buddhists to assert that Buddhism might serve the nation's interests were, of course, nothing new in the Japanese tradition, but the terms of the argument were different. Where Buddhism in past centuries had sought to expand its social and political role, in the Tokugawa it would seek to preserve its hard-won gains against new and more formidable challenges.

In his essay, Royall Tyler calls our attention to two figures who are significant in this regard, Suzuki Shōsan (1579-1655) and Kakugyō Tōbutsu (1541-1646). Shōsan maintained that Buddhism was the key to any enduring peace or stability under the banner of the Tokugawa, and he regarded Buddhism as containing within itself all that was necessary to provide for the individual. He imagined the shogun's role as that of the ultimate arbiter of Buddhism's doctrines and himself as nothing less than the shogun's loyal adviser. The legend surrounding Kakugyō Tōbutsu and Tokugawa Ieyasu is also instructive in this regard. According to the legend, the great deity of Mt. Fuji, Sengen Daibosatsu, heralded in 1583 the arrival of heaven's designated future ruler, none other than Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ieyasu is said to have made a pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji with his close Buddhist adviser Tenkai (1536-1643), and together they are said to have entered the Hitoana cave where they received the complete teachings of Sengen Daibosatsu, returning twice for further instruction in later years.

Of course, Neo-Confucianism was well equipped to contribute to the legitimizing function of the new discourse. Confucianism had traditionally served this function in China, but Japanese elites had long been accustomed to justifying their status more on the grounds of pedigree and precedent than merit or humanity. Yet once the validity of Neo-Confucian assumptions was acknowledged in the early Tokugawa, there arose the problem of reconciling Neo-Confucian norms with Japanese reality, as Kate Nakai indicates in her essay. For example, in a Confucian-inspired history of Japan, Hayashi Razan's (1583-1657) son, Hayashi Gahō (1618-1680), cast Tokugawa Ieyasu in the classic guise of the newly anointed recipient of the mandate of heaven, equipping him both morally and spiritually for the task of humane rulership. However, the obverse side of this issue—that heaven

might withdraw its mandate from an inhumane regime—was of necessity skirted by all Tokugawa Confucian thinkers until the very last years of the Tokugawa.

Likewise, Chu Hsi's notion of the Way of the ruler, the Way of the minister, the Way of the parent, the Way of the child, and so on, divided the social system into constituent functions in such a way as to affirm the enduring stability and continuity of the status quo. This highly segmented way of interpreting society reappears in several guises in Tokugawa thought and may also be an indication of Neo-Confucianism's success in Tokugawa Japan. It was, after all, what Toyotomi Hideyoshi had attempted to do through legislation by disarming the peasants, removing samurai from villages, and "freezing" all individuals and their descendants into component, class-defined functions. Nonetheless, the economic realities of Tokugawa Japan propelled the (in Confucian eyes) despised merchant class into a position with considerable social leverage.

What is clear, however, is that Neo-Confucianism alone did not service these legitimizing functions for the Tokugawa bakufu, nor did it function with the degree of official orthodoxy that has heretofore been assumed of it. Whence, then, this concern with orthodoxy? Not surprisingly, the concern would appear to have originated among those who stood most directly to benefit from the official endorsement of their thought. For example, as Herman Ooms indicates, it was the descendants of Hayashi Razan who skillfully fabricated the impression of a monopolistic orthodoxy allegedly enjoyed by the premier Tokugawa Neo-Confucian, Hayashi Razan. Similarly, Suzuki Shōsan and those who spun the legend of Tōbutsu and Ieyasu understood the potential benefit that might devolve upon them through their endorsement of the status quo. It was not until the mid-seventeenth century that the issue of orthodoxy itself arose, and it may not have been until precisely this time that Neo-Confucianism began to enjoy a degree of acceptance that can be said even to approximate its status as orthodoxy in China. Yet, by this time, responses to Neo-Confucianism were already incipient, confirming the extraordinary degree of pluralism and intellectual diversity that characterized late-seventeenth-century thought in Japan. As Maruyama Masao observed in making something of a correction to his earlier thesis, "The diffusion of Neo-Confucianism as an ideology and the School of Ancient Learning's challenge to it developed almost contemporaneously. Moreover, if one asks not just about *scholarly* Confucianism but about the basic thought categories of Confucianism that constituted the *Aspekstruktur* of Tokugawa society, then one can

argue that they tenaciously retained a currency until the very last instant of the Tokugawa regime."¹⁸

It is remarkable how quickly, deeply, and widely interest in Neo-Confucianism spread in Tokugawa Japan. The Japanese, like the Koreans some centuries earlier, appear to have taken Confucian thought seriously, almost passionately, and even if the degree of official interest in Neo-Confucianism may have been exaggerated, it would appear likely that the bakufu's interest in Confucian thought, and the attendant prestige which such interest bestowed, contributed to the currency of Confucian thought in Japan. Confucianism was, after all, able to provide answers to the differing questions of various shogunal governments from the start of the Tokugawa period until its end.

One can find the penetration of Confucian thought and vocabulary in any number of areas of intellectual pursuit in Tokugawa Japan. For example, the outburst during the years 1640 to 1720 of Japanese historical writings that sought to evaluate the Japanese past in light of Confucian historiographical principles is one indication of a new level of commitment to Confucianism in Japan, and Kate Nakai's analysis of historiography in the first half of the Tokugawa era reveals the extent to which Confucian thought adapts to Japanese concerns. Similarly, the new interest among seventeenth-century Shinto theologians in accommodating their doctrines to this new Confucian thought is at once a confirmation of the prestige that thought enjoyed in quondam intellectual circles and an example of Shinto's traditional sensitivity to major currents in the intellectual history of Japan. That such efforts in the Shinto camp were matched by leading seventeenth-century Neo-Confucians like Hayashi Razan and Yamazaki Ansai (1618–1682), who sought to fashion new Shinto theologies using a Neo-Confucian structure, attests to the mutually advantageous nature of such endeavors, and the eventual appearance of Confucian-Shinto popularists is further indication of Neo-Confucianism's penetration into the "ground bass" of Tokugawa thought.¹⁹

There is, however, perhaps no better indication of Confucianism's penetration into this substructure of Tokugawa culture than its appearance in the popular literature of the period. Tokugawa literature was, as Donald Keene indicates in his essay, prevalently popular and thus mirrors elements in Tokugawa society and culture, however warped such mirrored images might be. Though generalizations are

¹⁸ Maruyama, *Studies*, p. xxxv. Original emphasis retained.

¹⁹ Following Shigeru Matsumoto's sense of Robert Bellah's term "ground bass" in Matsumoto's *Motoori Norinaga* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 1–7.

difficult, Confucian philosophy tends to appear in Tokugawa literature as appealing more to the intellect than to the heart, and being more rational than emotional. In fact, Confucianism seems to emerge in Tokugawa literature as a highly charged metaphor for a complex set of identifications that would include Chineseness as opposed to Japanese-ness, *giri*, or a preoccupation with moral behavior, as opposed to *niinjō*, or a resignation to the demands of the heart, craftiness as opposed to wit, and even stuffiness or aloofness as opposed to a more casual demeanor. China remained the central point of reference for the Japanese during all but the last years of the Tokugawa, and to the extent that in the popular mind to be Chinese meant to be Confucian, considerable literary license was possible in the interpretation of this metaphor.

The extent to which Confucian-related themes emerge in the popular culture of the Tokugawa may at first seem surprising to those familiar with the sheer complexity of Confucian thought, but of its popularity there can be little doubt. In a list of the accomplishments of an otherwise wayward son, Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), the first truly popular writer in Japanese literature, cites a familiarity with Utsunomiya Ton'an's (1634-1710) lectures on the Confucian Way alongside such other accomplishments as familiarity with linked verse, flower arrangement, the tea ceremony, archery, and a mastery of a broad range of musical instruments.²⁰ Whether or not Utsunomiya Ton'an was a "popular" lecturer, one may surmise that familiarity with Confucian doctrine was as much an asset for Saikaku's townsman as wealth and liberal education were for Daniel Defoe's (1660-1731) "true-bred merchant."

There is probably a connection here with the spread of popular education in Tokugawa Japan, an education based on a curriculum which while not exactly Neo-Confucian was without doubt close. One of the major social issues confronting the Tokugawa regime of the seventeenth century was the problem of the "civilianization" of the *rōnin* (masterless samurai) classes in an age when their martial talents were no longer as necessary as they had been prior to the Tokugawa period. Virtually all Tokugawa men of letters were taught to read using a curriculum that included the Four Books and several lesser Confucian works. Of course, there was a need for teachers and tutors, and many current and former samurai found an educational niche for themselves in this new age of peace. In much the same way that Ihara Saikaku complained of the ease with which amateurs might

²⁰ Peter Nosco, trans., *Some Final Words of Advice* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1980), p. 41.

raise their shingle and proclaim themselves teachers and masters of versification, a Buddhist work called the *Gion monogatari* (Tale of Gion) speaks bitterly of those young men who, bored with being monks, might return to lay life by learning a bit about the Four Books and establishing themselves as independent scholars.²¹ Of course, where there are teachers, there are also students, and this widespread interest in Confucian thought, as well as its identification with literacy, are further indices of the role Confucianism played in popular education and culture.

Related to this phenomenon of the penetration of Neo-Confucian assumptions and vocabulary into the popular culture of Tokugawa Japan is the appearance of a broad range of ideological responses in the Confucian, Buddhist, and nativist intellectual camps, a set of responses characterized by classicism and fundamentalism. Of these responses, that which took place within the Confucian arena is perhaps the best known. As Japanese scholars arrived at a more sophisticated understanding of the vitality and diversity that lay beneath the surface of Chinese and Korean Confucian circles, they naturally drew closer to teachings which were, if not orthodox, certainly representative of important strains within Chinese thought. In China the single most important Neo-Confucian alternative to the teachings of Chu Hsi were those of Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528), whose heterodox philosophy emphasized the unity between thought and action. In Japan, however, the most forceful challenge to orthodox Neo-Confucianism was mounted by the school of Ancient Learning (*kogaku*).

The school of Ancient Learning, which like the Wang Yang-ming school (J. *Yōmeigaku*) in Japan had prototypes within the intellectual history of China, based its teachings on the disarmingly simple proposition that if one wished to understand the truths of ancient Confucian teaching, then that cause could be better served by reading the ancient writings themselves than by studying the exegesis on those texts written by Chu Hsi or others. The major proponents of this school, Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685), Itō Jinsai (1627-1705), Jinsai's son Itō Tōgai (1670-1736), and Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728), succeeded first in establishing a highly systematic methodology for the study of ancient texts; second, in making Confucianism in Japan more recognizably "Japanese"; and finally in further enhancing the degree of philosophical variety available to intellectuals at that time.

For practical purposes, the school of Ancient Learning can be dated

²¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 130-132; Royall Tyler's paper in this volume; and Rubinger, *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan*, pp. 41-59.

from 1665, the date of Yamaga Sokō's publication of a work titled *Essential Teachings of the Sages* (*Seikyō yōroku*). Though the leaders of Ancient Learning were drawn to it for differing reasons, Sokō's statement as to why he turned to the study of ancient texts spoke for many who later adopted this approach

In the early 1660s, I learned that my misunderstandings were due to reading works by scholars from the Han, T'ang, Sung and Ming dynasties. I went directly to the works of the Duke of Chou and Confucius, and taking them as my model, I was able to straighten my own line of thought. From then on, I stopped using the writings of later ages, and by diligently studying works of the sages day and night, I finally clarified and understood the message of the sages. . . . Even if your speech and actions are disciplined and you learn a thousand and one quotations by heart, this clearly just takes you away from the main point and has nothing to do with the message of the sages.²²

All Confucians had sought the "true message of the sages," but for Sokō and others in the Ancient Learning movement, that message was something that spoke for itself and did not require the exegetical overlay of later centuries in order to be comprehensible. Since Ancient Learning scholars insisted on dealing directly with texts two millennia removed from their own day, they developed techniques for handling such materials textually and linguistically and initiated the study of Chinese philology in Tokugawa Japan.

The Ancient Learning school's objections to Neo-Confucianism, however, were not limited to methodology. Itō Jinsai's remark that "one cannot hope to explain away everything in the world with the one word principle,"²³ and Yamaga Sokō's assertion that "anyone who eliminates human desire is not a human being at all,"²⁴ struck at the very heart of orthodox Neo-Confucian metaphysics. Related to these attacks on Neo-Confucian doctrine were the school's attempts to transform Japanese Confucianism into something more in tune with its new setting. Sokō was particularly moved by this concern. He was attracted to the original teachings of Confucius as an image of life in the idealized ancient Chou state, since he felt that those images provided an appropriate model for the application of Confucian doctrine in a paramilitary state, and in this regard he has been credited with being the early-modern formulator of the doctrine

²² From his *Haisho Zampitsu*, in *Yamaga Sokō bunshū* (Yūhōdō Bunko, 1926), p. 485.

²³ *Dōjimon*, NRI, 5:113.

²⁴ *Takkyō dōmon*, ZGR, 10:286.

of *bushidō*, or the Way of the Warrior. Similarly, Itō Jinsai's concept of benevolence (*C.*, *jen*; *J.*, *jin*), rooted as it was in terms of social goodness, reflected a deep-seated Japanese concern with the practical application of virtue in a social context, rather than an inclination to ponder virtue as an abstract concept.

No Ancient Learning scholar argued more forcefully and innovatively than Ogyū Sorai, the subject of Samuel Yamashita's essay in this volume. For Sorai, the assumption that one might through the workings of the human intellect arrive at an interpretation or explanation of the original message of the sages was nothing less than arrogance and betrayed a serious lack of reverence for the classical texts. He regarded all later interpretations of the teachings of the early kings and Confucius as misreadings that had the lamentable result of obscuring the culture represented in those texts. He regarded the retrieval of these artifacts of classical Chinese civilization as essential to their reverencing, and he condemned those "who [spoke] on the authority of principle and their own minds." As Yamashita points out, Sorai also regarded human nature as lively, physical, and infinitely diverse, and in this regard his teachings may represent an acknowledgment of human individuality unprecedented within the Japanese Confucian tradition. Sorai's school not only attracted a sizable following during his lifetime, but actually continued to grow during the two decades following his death.²⁵

A number of interesting comparisons can be drawn between developments in the Confucian arena during the first half of the Tokugawa period and corresponding developments in eighteenth-century Japanese nativism. In this regard, Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769) and Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), the two leading figures of eighteenth-century National Learning (*kokugaku*), provide the most fruitful comparison. Kamo Mabuchi's formative years overlapped with the period when the teachings of Ogyū Sorai were at their peak of acceptance and the early years of their decline. He had briefly studied Sorai's teachings under Watanabe Mōan (b. 1687) in Mabuchi's native Hamamatsu, and it appears that one of Mabuchi's closer friends during his earlier years in Edo was Hattori Nankaku (1683-1749), another of Sorai's students.

The connection between Mabuchi's thought and that of the Sorai school was, in fact, a strong one, but it was a connection based on Mabuchi's repeated rejection of several of the Sorai school's basic assumptions. Mabuchi's reaction against the teachings of Ogyū Sorai was evident as early as his involvement in the *Kokka hachiron* contro-

²⁵ See Maruyama, *Studies*, p. 136.

versy of the early 1740s in which Mabuchi had attacked Kada Arimaro's (1706–1751) notion that poetry was of negligible relevance to the well-being of the state.²⁶ Kada Arimaro's position in the controversy represented a direct application of Ogyū Sorai's Chinese literary theory to verse from the native tradition, and it is worth noting that at this time Sorai's teachings had just reached the tail end of their period of broadest acceptance.

This rejection by Mabuchi of the Sorai school's teachings became even more conspicuous during his last years. For example, while Mabuchi shared Sorai's view that Chinese Confucianism was a man-made Way—an assumption that lay at the heart of all Sorai's teachings—it was precisely this fact that Mabuchi most strongly objected to in his vilification of the Confucian Way. He claimed that since Confucianism was a man-made Way, it was a product of human cleverness and that such cleverness was incompatible with the “true” dictates of the natural Way of Heaven and Earth. Furthermore, Mabuchi's assertion of the presence *in illo tempore* of Confucian virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, and so on, was intended as a rebuttal of claims to the contrary by Dazai Shundai (1680–1747), another of Sorai's students. Shundai had asserted that proof that the Way did not exist in Japan prior to the introduction of Chinese learning “lay in the fact that there were no Japanese words for benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, filial piety and so on.”²⁷ Mabuchi's claim that those virtues existed “throughout the world like the movement of the four seasons”²⁸ was a specific repudiation of Shundai's position and was actually one of no fewer than thirty attacks on the Sorai school written during the years 1750 to 1790.²⁹

A more subtle debt, however, was owed by Mabuchi to Neo-Confucian teachings. In many ways his concept of the True Heart (*magokoro*) resembled the Neo-Confucian notion of the original nature (*C.*, *pen-jan chih hsing*; *J.*, *honzen no sei*). Like Chu Hsi's original nature, Kamo Mabuchi's True Heart represented the innate goodness that man lost through a specific set of identifiable actions—succumbing to desires and emotions in Chu Hsi's case, and adopting Chinese ways in Mabuchi's. Moreover, the essential quest for both Chu Hsi and Mabuchi was the attainment of human perfection in the present

²⁶ On the *Kokka hachiron* controversy, see Peter Nosco, “Nature, Invention, and National Learning,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41, no. 1 (June 1981).

²⁷ From his *Benidōsho*, quoted in Saigusa Yasutaka, *Kamo Mabuchi*, Jinbutsu Sōsho, no. 93 (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1962), p. 288.

²⁸ *Koku-i kō*, in Yamamoto Yutaka, comp., *Kōhon Kamo Mabuchi zenshū: shisō hen* (Kōbundō, 1942), 2:1095.

²⁹ Maruyama, *Studies*, pp. 136–137.

through recovery of that original goodness which each man enjoyed as his birthright. For Chu Hsi, this entailed the sage's return to the principle of heaven, while for Mabuchi it involved the unconscious observance of the Way of Heaven and Earth.

This structural affinity between Kamo Mabuchi's nativist ideology and Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucianism was almost certainly not deliberate on Mabuchi's part and merely indicates the extent to which many of the basic assumptions of Neo-Confucianism had penetrated the intellectual strata of Tokugawa Japan. Mabuchi remained unreserved in his criticism of Japanese Confucians throughout the last decade of his life and vehemently attacked their “ignorance about ancient Japan.”³⁰ Nonetheless, as I have argued elsewhere, the reason why Mabuchi's position in the *Kokka hachiron* controversy more closely resembled that of his Confucian-inspired patron Tayasu Munetake (1715–1771) was due to their common faith in the traditional Confucian assumption that literature, in particular poetry, was of fundamental normative value in the governing of the state.³¹

Motoori Norinaga, the most significant of all Tokugawa nativists, likewise owed a great deal structurally to Confucian thought, in particular to the thought of Ogyū Sorai. Norinaga's ideological indebtedness to Sorai has been superlatively explicated by Maruyama Masao, and the arguments are well known. Like Sorai, Norinaga distrusted the human intellect as an instrument sufficient to glean the truths of revealed wisdom; where Sorai's attitude toward heaven was one of awe and reverence, Norinaga's attitude toward the divine presence in everyday life was no less wondrous; Norinaga agreed with Sorai's reducing the sage to mortal dimensions, and like Mabuchi it was precisely this human role in the creation of the Way of the Sages that made the Confucian Way so objectionable; and like Sorai's Confucian fundamentalism, Norinaga's nativist fundamentalism bound him to gleaning ancient truths from ancient texts, in this case the *Kojiki* (712), Japan's most ancient extant history. It can even be argued that Norinaga's highly deterministic view of human action—a view that

³⁰ A charge directed against Kaibara Ekken (1630–1714), a Chu Hsi follower, and “others like him,” in *Tatsu no kimie Kamo no Mabuchi iokotae*, in *Kōhon Kamo Mabuchi zenshū: shisō hen*, 2:1013. Of all Japanese Neo-Confucians, the only one who seems to have won a degree of respect from Mabuchi was Arai Hakuseki, whom Mabuchi described as a man who “often made good points in his writings” (*ibid.*, p. 1045). While Hakuseki was particularly well versed in Japanese history (see Kate Nakai's paper in this volume), Mabuchi's respect may also have derived in part from the fact that one of Hakuseki's students, Doi Motorari, was an early tutor of his patron Tayasu Munetake.

³¹ “Nature, Invention, and National Learning,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41 (1981): 75–91.

interpreted every event and action as a direct manifestation of the will of a myriad of gods—resulted in an acknowledgment of human diversity that in substantial portion replicates Sorai's sophisticated view of human individuality. For Norinaga, the only authority for informing human action was that of ancient precedent. The Way of the Gods (*kami no michi*) was the way things were in the Divine Age; it could be learned through accounts of the Divine Age in works like the *Kojiki*; and since human reason was intrinsically incapable of comprehending the divine, personal shrewdness (*sakashira*) had no place in man's attempts to act in accord with the Way of the Gods. If one sincerely wished to behave in accordance with the Way of the Gods, then one's only recourse was to study the record of that Way and to place oneself at the discretion of the wishes of the gods.

In general, then, one can identify several respects in which nativist fundamentalism was indebted to Confucian fundamentalism.³² First, Tokugawa nativists agreed with the Neo-Confucian assumption that at birth an individual's original inclinations were purely good and that the seeds of this goodness, though lost through a set of identifiable actions, were ultimately recoverable. Second, in the Ancient Learning school's approach, Tokugawa nativists saw a methodology suited to the examination of ancient texts from their own tradition. Third, the National Learning scholars were in fundamental agreement with the school of Ogyū Sorai, which believed that the sages, after all, were just men, but where Sorai and his followers found in this fact cause to celebrate, Tokugawa nativists regarded it as the central fallacy of Confucian teachings. Further, the nativists agreed with the Confucians generally that at some point in the past, life was preferable to what it was then—society was ordered, the state was well governed, men and their families enjoyed tranquility—and that the improvement of life in the present was contingent upon a sound understanding of life in the past.

Curiously, the classicism and fundamentalism that form such a conspicuous aspect of both Confucian and nativist thought in eighteenth-century Japan are also represented in Tokugawa Buddhism. Jiun Sonja (1718–1804), the subject of Paul Watt's chapter, had a degree of mastery of Sanskrit that was unprecedented among Japanese Buddhists, and his intention in acquiring this mastery was to draw closer to the original meaning of the most ancient Buddhist

³² The question of whether Confucian fundamentalism preceded and inspired nativist fundamentalism is debatable. See my "Keichū (1640–1701): Forerunner of National Learning," *Asian Thought and Society* 5 (1980): 237–252.

scriptures with the aim of recovering *Butsu zaise no Bukkyō*, or "Buddhism as it was when the Buddha was alive." The recipient of a Neo-Confucian education, Jiun was familiar with the Ancient Learning school of Itō Jinsai and was acquainted with the teachings of Ogyū Sorai. His Buddhist response to Confucianism was in many ways reminiscent of the Buddhist-Shinto syncretism of nearly a thousand years earlier, when Buddhism likewise stood to gain politically, socially, and evangelically from such affiliations. The Buddhist-Confucian dialogue of Jiun and others in the Tokugawa was facilitated first by early Neo-Confucianism's indebtedness to certain Buddhist formulations in China, and second by Neo-Confucianism's long period of incubation in medieval Japanese Zen monasteries. As Paul Watt indicates, Jiun's mastery of Sanskrit and his profound concern with Buddhism's ability to meet the intellectual and ideological challenges of his day indicate both his commitment to this highly syncretic dialogue and his participation in the new fundamentalist discourse.

It is indeed significant that such disparate figures as Ogyū Sorai, Motoori Norinaga, and Jiun Sonja—paragons of rationalism in their respective traditions—all found limits on the ability of the human intellect to arrive at ultimate truths. Jiun, like his contemporary Motoori Norinaga, criticized Confucians for too great a reliance on this aspect of reason, and in this sense they can both be regarded as sharing the earlier sentiments of Ogyū Sorai. The conjunction of these various forms of fundamentalism, as well as the peculiar admixture of confidence in and distrust of rationalism present in their respective modes of thought, suggest that this phenomenon of fundamentalism in mid-Tokugawa thought deserves further study.

One controversial point in the evaluation of Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa discourse has been the status of Neo-Confucian thought during the Tokugawa era's last century. Here again the Maruyama thesis has exerted great influence, although to an extent that may perhaps obscure certain important functions of Neo-Confucian thought during the Tokugawa era's last decades. It will be recalled that the school of Ogyū Sorai achieved the peak of its popularity during the two decades following Sorai's death. According to Maruyama, decline then set in, and the decline of the Sorai school "meant that Confucianism itself was relinquishing its leadership in the intellectual world" of Tokugawa Japan. Interpreting the Tokugawa environment as one that abhors a "vacuum," Maruyama sees the school of Na-

tional Learning replacing Confucianism as the hegemonic movement in intellectual circles of that time.³³

The question of "leadership" is a complex one, but it would certainly appear that Maruyama's assertion could lead one to underestimate the vitality, relevance, and persistence of Neo-Confucian topics and themes in the discourse of the late Tokugawa. One prominent feature of the Tokugawa period's last decades is the appearance of distinctive, often charismatic figures whose teachings were described as *yonaoshi*, or literally "rectification of the world." The term *yonaoshi* first appears during the 1780s, "becoming," as Herman Ooms has described elsewhere, "increasingly popular until the Meiji restoration as a word to indicate recurrent popular movements to redress the social and political wrongs of society."³⁴ Such movements appear to have arisen as a result of anxiety that the harmony and stability of the Tokugawa feudal order might be threatened or perhaps even in part lost. Consequently, one finds numerous figures in the late Tokugawa in pursuit of the renewal of that order, or at least the renewal of the contemporary perception of what that order might have represented.

Perhaps the best-known *yonaoshi* figure was Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758-1829), leader of the Kansei Reform movement of the closing years of the eighteenth century. In 1790, during his six-year tenure as head of the Council of Elders (*rōjū*), Matsudaira Sadanobu was the author and promulgator of a brief edict known as "The Kansei Prohibition of Heterodox Studies" (*Kansei igaku no kin*). The edict was addressed to Hayashi Kinpō (1733-1792), head of the Bakufu College, a position that had remained hereditary within the Hayashi family since the college's inception in the seventeenth century. It called upon Kinpō to reaffirm his school's commitment to more orthodox versions of Neo-Confucian teachings, and to repress heterodox teachings within the school. Several years later, a similar directive was promulgated to the heads of the domain schools and colleges, though the effect of the edict outside the capital was less pronounced.

Some have taken the Prohibition of Heterodox Studies to be an affirmation of Neo-Confucianism's ever-increasing vigor and popularity in the Tokugawa era, while others have regarded it as the last gasp of an otherwise moribund tradition. The truth, as is usually the case, would appear to lie somewhere between these extremes. Ma-

³³ Maruyama, *Studies*, p. 143.

³⁴ *Charismatic Bureaucrat: A Political Biography of Matsudaira Sadanobu, 1758-1829* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 49. See also Anne Walthal, "Narratives of Peasant Uprisings in Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 1983).

tsudaira Sadanobu was in significant measure inspired by the attempts at reform of Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684-1751; shogun 1716-1745), whose Kyōhō Reform of the 1720s can be regarded as a major attempt to resurrect those values, policies, and attitudes that were identified with Tokugawa Ieyasu at the very start of the Tokugawa regime. Matsudaira Sadanobu, like Tokugawa Yoshimune before him, was confronted with serious fiscal and social dilemmas, and it is a common historical phenomenon for leaders faced with such problems to seek to resurrect the policies of the "founding fathers." In this sense, Matsudaira Sadanobu's policies might be designated, to modify a familial term, as restorationist "once removed."

There are two points here that are significant. The first is that by attempting to enhance the degree of ideological orthodoxy of the Bakufu College, and by identifying orthodoxy as something that had once been characteristic of the school at its start and that later somehow had been lost, Matsudaira Sadanobu was actually seeking to resurrect a misperception of the original status of Hayashi Razan and his immediate successors. This misperception was so beguiling that it had proved no less captivating to Yoshimune some seven decades earlier. Neo-Confucianism, as mentioned previously, was not the only or even necessarily the single most important factor in the complex discourse of the early Tokugawa. Thus Sadanobu's policies were based more upon his perception of the relationship between the bakufu and Neo-Confucianism in the early Tokugawa than on the actual reality of that relationship.

Second, by framing his attempts at reform in the context of the resurrection of past policies regarded as "tried and true," Matsudaira Sadanobu was evidencing a characteristic present in Confucian thought from the very beginning. Confucius, as is well known, insisted that he be regarded not as a reformer but rather as the faithful transmitter of teachings and traditions that might otherwise be lost. In this respect, Matsudaira Sadanobu was, almost certainly unconsciously, behaving in a manner consistent with the highest restorationist ideals of the Confucian tradition.

Despite these attempts at Confucian renewal, the Tokugawa bakufu in its last half-century began increasingly to exhibit those tendencies and problems that would eventually result in its final demise. Nonetheless, even in this time of decline, or perhaps one should say in particular during this period of decline, one can find examples of Neo-Confucian thought being used by intellectuals in order to resolve their own dilemmas, if not in the sense of affecting a reversal of social and political decline, at least in the sense of providing per-

sonal answers for how they as individuals might cope with such a situation. By these final decades of the Tokugawa era, numerous intellectuals of Confucian persuasion, but not necessarily figures directly involved in political movements, came to regard themselves, as Okada Takehiko points out in his chapter, as the direct heirs to an elaborate intellectual dialogue that had its origins in China in the late-Ming and Ch'ing (1644-1912) dynasties and of Yi-dynasty Korea.

These late-Tokugawa scholars exhibited a degree of eclecticism in their thought perhaps unmatched in the history of Tokugawa Confucianism from the time of Fujiwara Seika (1561-1617). As Okada indicates, these Neo-Confucians partook in significant measure from the teachings of not just Chu Hsi but also those of Wang Yang-ming, and there is perhaps no better indication of the continued vitality of Neo-Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan than the intensely personal commitment of these thinkers to its teachings for answers on matters relating to the mind, human nature, and the role of the individual in troubled times.

There has also been a tendency to imagine that with the advent of the Meiji restoration of 1868, somehow Confucianism ceases almost immediately to be a motivating factor for the individual in either personally or politically significant action. The role of the Wang Yang-ming school in stimulating activist behavior among its followers in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji (1868-1912) has been well documented, but in the same manner in which many scholars have underestimated the conservative motivations of the leaders of the Meiji restoration, intellectual historians have tended to de-emphasize the persistence of Confucian issues in the early-Meiji period.

Matsumoto Sannosuke's paper calls our attention to Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901), an intellectual whose standard characterization has been that of the classic Meiji liberal, or the "Japanese Rousseau" as he has often been called. Matsumoto demonstrates how Chōmin's concept of freedom and liberty was indebted to assumptions that can be traced ideologically through Itō Jinsai in the Ancient Learning school all the way back to Mencius (372-289 B.C.). Chōmin's notion that freedom required "cultivation" and "development" might seem odd to an intellectual historian familiar with the concept of freedom in the West, but these notions make perfect sense once they are regarded as structural resonances of those elements of personal cultivation and human development which are evidenced by Mencius as the first orthodox interpreter of Confucius' teaching. Freedom, in this context, thus becomes not something that is won and then retained, but rather

something to which humans continually aspire and which requires nourishment no less than any other human virtue.

It is tempting, at this juncture, to step back and to attempt to locate some of the themes that have arisen in this discussion of Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa discourse in the broader perspective of Neo-Confucianism in East Asian culture. In English no one has written more extensively or masterfully on these larger issues than Wm. Theodore de Bary.³⁵ In an essay first published in 1959, de Bary identified humanism, rationalism, historical-mindedness and ethnocentrism as characteristics of Neo-Confucian thought, and each of these in varying degrees and contexts is conspicuous in Tokugawa discourse and serves to distinguish Tokugawa thought from that of the medieval period.³⁶ Significantly, in Tokugawa discourse these themes are not limited to discussions within the Confucian arena alone, but also feature prominently in the myriad responses and reactions to Neo-Confucianism that reverberate throughout Tokugawa thought.

There are other features that likewise demand our attention. One cannot but be struck by the intellectually compelling quality of Chu Hsi's thought, since there is no other convincing explanation of the persistence of Neo-Confucian themes in a Tokugawa environment that valued knowledge of Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books not as a possible stepping-stone to an official position, but precisely as an indication of intellectual mastery and achievement. Chu Hsi had been condemned in his own day as a heretic, and his many followers had been ordered not to attend his funeral, though they of course disobeyed and attended in large numbers. In China, as in Japan, Neo-Confucian thought appears first to have spread on its own intellectual and philosophic merits without the advantage of state sponsorship. Becoming established in local academies in the late-Sung and early-Yüan (1260-1368) periods, it was not until later that the thought became the curriculum of the official school system in China where it was incorporated, as is well known, into the examination system. It then appealed in succession to the Mongols of the Yüan, the Chinese of the Ming, and the Manchus of the Ch'ing, suggesting an element of breadth in Neo-Confucianism's appeal both to ruling elites and to educated members of the scholar-official class. One can also observe

³⁵ The following discussion is heavily indebted to remarks made by Professor de Bary in his role as discussant at the St. John's Conference.

³⁶ "Some Common Tendencies in Neo-Confucianism," in David S. Nivison and Arthur Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 25-49.

fruitful parallels between the highly competitive heterodox Confucian environment of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in Japan and the situation in late-Ming China, but the comparison requires qualification. In Japan the domain schools enjoyed a degree of ideological independence that their Chinese counterparts would have envied, since in China the government pressured local academies to follow the teachings of Chu Hsi, understandably in light of the examination system's role in staffing China's complex bureaucracy. The only comparable instance of such pressure in the Tokugawa context—the Kansei Prohibition of Heterodox Studies—was of more symbolic than actual success.

While calling attention to this intellectually compelling quality of Neo-Confucianism, it must in the same breath be acknowledged, as Donald Keene indicates in his paper, that obedience to Confucian principles does not necessarily bring happiness or peace of mind. The peculiar moral and political dilemmas of leading activist figures in the last years of the Tokugawa and the early years of the Meiji suggest that taking one's role in the broader environment seriously—and, of course, all Neo-Confucians were in some sense devoted practitioners of seriousness—involved confronting the fundamental contradiction that arose at that time between the bakufu's professed ideals and the interests of the bakufu itself, between the shogun as "Barbarian-Subduing Generalissimo" (*sei-i tai shōgun*), as he was formally styled, and the shogun as caretaker of a government incapable, and daily more apparently so, of dealing with what the Japanese and their emperor perceived to be a foreign (that is, barbarian) menace. Adopting a Neo-Confucian perspective on the Meiji restoration of 1868, one might, albeit simplistically, regard this political watershed as an extraordinary exercise in the traditional Confucian theme of the rectification of names, that is, in the matching of reality and terminology.

The relationship between the secular rule of the shogun and the religious prestige of the reigning emperor—a relationship virtually irreconcilable in Chinese Confucian terms—had long lurked, like some dark secret, behind the fastidious veil of Tokugawa political thought. There had, of course, been tears in this veil. One is struck by the anecdote, cited in Kate Nakai's paper, of Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1701), lord of Mito, who is said to have bowed toward Kyoto each New Year's morning declaiming to his closest vassals, "My lord is the emperor, the present shogun is the head of my family. One must take care not to misunderstand this situation." Takeuchi Shikibu (1712–1767) and Yamagata Daini (1725–1767), both followers of the teach-

ings of Yamazaki Ansei (1618–1682), were outstanding eighteenth-century imperial loyalists;³⁷ and, of course, the intellectual horizon of the Tokugawa's last decades was crowded with spokesmen who, from a variety of Confucian and nativist perspectives, sought to rectify their world.

At the St. John's Conference, Wing-tsit Chan called the participants' attention to the possibility that the Japanese reaction to Confucianism was characteristic of those who inherit a mode of thought as opposed to those who generate that mode of thought. In other words, perhaps the Japanese attitude toward Neo-Confucianism in the Tokugawa period betrays the attitude of a purist whose enthusiasm through conversion is likely to exceed the enthusiasm of one who takes such matters for granted. In this sense, the Japanese reception of Neo-Confucian teachings in the Tokugawa is suggestive of deep-seated elements of both conservatism and conservatism in Japanese thought.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to conclude from this discussion either that the Japanese were merely passive recipients of an imported mode of thought or that Neo-Confucianism necessarily repeats developmental patterns when transplanted into non-Chinese East Asian settings. In the case of the former, Japanese history demonstrates time and again the failure of Chinese models in Japan, and to cite just one example relevant to this discussion, it remains a striking irony that the Japanese were never inclined to borrow the elaborate examination system so well established in China until the nineteenth century when the inspiration was arguably more Western than Chinese in the establishment of this meritocracy. In the case of the latter, it is likewise clear that to attempt to evaluate Neo-Confucianism's progress in East Asia as one that is bound by certain patterns and processes would undermine the intimate connection between ideology and society, a connection that by now requires no further defense. As this cursory examination of the topic of Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa discourse has sought to demonstrate, the growth of Neo-Confucianism in Japan is suggestive of numerous parallels with its corresponding developments in China and Korea, but Neo-Confucianism's success in Japan was due at least as much to the refashioning of those doctrines by Japanese intellectuals as it was to the sheer flexibility of the Neo-Confucian system to accommodate itself to such transformation.

³⁷ See Herschel Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 248–253.

By way of conclusion, then, we may observe the following points in assessing the nature of Neo-Confucianism's role in the evolving discourse of Japan's Tokugawa period: First, Neo-Confucianism is present at the very start of the Tokugawa as one of several modes of thought that vied for the attention of the new bakufu government; second, the teachings benefited from a measure of official recognition and rapidly penetrated the emergent popular culture; third, responses and reactions to Neo-Confucian teachings can be found throughout the vast landscape of Tokugawa thought, contributing to overall structural coherence as well as to pluralism and diversity; fourth, far from fading, the relevance of Neo-Confucian teachings is reaffirmed during the late Tokugawa, particularly in terms of the teachings' efficacy at assuaging personal moral and ethical uncertainty; and finally, the doctrine's success in affecting change to and response in Tokugawa discourse was due primarily to the intellectually compelling quality of Neo-Confucian thought which continues to find articulate spokesmen even today.

TWO

NEO-CONFUCIANISM AND THE FORMATION OF EARLY TOKUGAWA IDEOLOGY: CONTOURS OF A PROBLEM

BY HERMAN OOMS

For hundreds of years, scholars have identified Neo-Confucianism as the official ideology of the Tokugawa bakufu. Over time this speculative ascription of a legitimizing function to Neo-Confucianism has hardened into a solid historical fact. Today, the awareness is dim that the links established by such identification entail a considerable amount of interpretation. It is the intention of this paper to take a look at the nature of this linkage between Neo-Confucianism, the early bakufu, and ideology.*

There are good reasons why this particular view has acquired such authority. One can find both historical and theoretical explanations for its unquestioned acceptance. First of all, several converging interpretations of certain historical developments in the Tokugawa period seem naturally to compose this overall picture of bakufu ideology. The most striking are as follows.

Starting with Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616; shogun, 1603-1605), rulers appear to have shown an interest in Neo-Confucian scholars and to have taken them into their service. Tokugawa Iemitsu (b. 1604, r. 1623-1651), the third shogun, even financed a school for Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) to propagate his teachings. Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691) and Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685), punished by the bakufu for their "unorthodox" views, were living proof of the existence of an official ideological threshold. Tsunayoshi (b. 1646; shogun, 1680-1709) ardently lectured on Neo-Confucianism. Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758-1829; chief councillor, 1787-1793) in the 1790s revived the Hayashi school to secure a "Neo-Confucian orthodoxy"

* This paper is based on a larger study, in progress at the time of the conference, for which financial support was granted by the Japan Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the American Philosophical Society. Meanwhile the study has been completed and will be published by Princeton University Press, under the title: *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*.