

INTRODUCTION

The China Factor in Tokugawa Culture

Although the Edo *bakufu* (military government) never established formal political ties with Qing China and trade with China was restricted to the port of Nagasaki, the Tokugawa period (also known as the Edo or early modern period, 1603–1868) was the heyday of Sino-Japanese intellectual and cultural exchanges. Tokugawa scholars engaged in Chinese learning mainly through imported classical Chinese texts, rather than direct person-to-person interaction.¹ To Tokugawa Japanese, China was a unique entity that played an important role in shaping Japanese thought and culture. Without China, Tokugawa intellectual life would not have been so flourishing and creative. Current scholarship on Tokugawa Japan tends to see China as either a model or “the Other.” This study aims to provide a new perspective by suggesting that China also functioned as a collection of building blocks. In other words, the people of the Tokugawa period appropriated and transformed Chinese elements to forge Japan’s own thought and culture. They selectively introduced and then modified Chinese culture to make it fit into the Japanese tradition. Chinese culture was highly localized in Tokugawa Japan. Chinese terms and forms survived, but the substance and the spirit were made Japanese. Hence, Sino-Japanese cultural exchange in the early modern period should be perceived as the interplay of the Japanization of Chinese culture and the Sinicization of Japanese culture. The three perceptions of China reflect different attitudes of Tokugawa intellectuals toward Chinese culture. These images of China could coexist in the same individual or intellectual school, serving as a reminder of the diversity and ambiguity in Tokugawa thought.

CHINA AS ROLE MODEL

Sinophilia was by no means a minor intellectual current among Tokugawa intellectuals, as it was not only embraced by Confucians and Sinologists, but prevalent in different schools of thought and culture as well.² Traveling to China was almost impossible, and Tokugawa Confucians and Sinologists could only visit China in their dreams. China became a nostalgic and blissful cultural homeland and utopian imaginary place. Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619) yearned to make a cultural pilgrimage to China, but the long distance and rough seas made the journey impossible. He wrote: “I always admire Chinese culture, and I want to see its cultural relics for myself.”³ In 1600, he paid a visit to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) wearing his own homemade Confucian-scholar costume. Kumazawa Banzan (1619–91) and Kaibara Ekken (1630–1714) praised China as the *shi-kuni* (teacher-nation), expressing gratitude to China for enlightening different aspects of Japan. Banzan argued that the impact of Chinese culture on Japan was all-encompassing and far-reaching:

China is the teacher-nation for the four seas and has contributed tremendously to Japan. Rites, music, books, mathematics, architecture, costumes, transportation, agricultural tools, weapons, medicine, acupuncture, officialdom, rankings, military codes, the ways of archery and riding, and miscellaneous skills and technologies were all imported from China.⁴

Ekken also acknowledged Japan’s indebtedness to China for introducing morality and etiquette:

Japan is pure and awesome in its social customs and is indeed a very fine nation. It is appropriate to refer to it as a nation of gentlemen. However, in uncivilized antiquity, Japan had neither etiquette nor law. There was no dress code, either. Wearing one’s hair down, folding the clothes to the left, and marrying one’s own sisters or nephews were very common. In the middle ages, Japan communicated frequently with China, learning from it and changing its customs. One can refer to the national histories to understand this. Although Japan has never been subordinated to China, it has been extensively adopting Chinese customs and teachings. Hence, China can be called the teacher-nation. We must not forget the foundations of China and should not look down upon it.⁵

Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) expressed his passion for all things Chinese as follows: “I have been indulging in the study of Chinese classics and admiring Chinese civilization ever since I was a child.”⁶ The Chinese civilization that he admired was the way of the Sages of the Three Dynasties. He referred to China as *Chūka* (Central Efflorescence or Central Civilization) and *Chūgoku* (Central Kingdom), and to himself as a *Nihonkoku ijin* (barbarian of the nation of Japan) and *tōi no hito* (eastern barbarian). He regretted very much that he was not born in the land of the sages and that “no sages were born in the Eastern Sea.”⁷ Sorai was not alone with regard to his attitude toward Chinese culture. Basically, Tokugawa intellectuals from different Confucian schools all enthusiastically introduced Chinese morality and etiquette.⁸ What Tokugawa Japanese admired was not the Qing Dynasty ruled by the Manchus, but the Three Dynasties under the sage-kings and the great Han and Tang dynasties. Their tendency to emphasize the past and belittle the present was salient.⁹ Tokugawa Sinophiles demonstrated a high level of confidence and nativist consciousness,¹⁰ and some believed in the concept of *kai hentai* (the transformation from civilized to barbarian and vice versa), seeing Japan as the new center of Confucian order in East Asia.

The Edo *bakufu* and some of its domains promoted Chinese learning.¹¹ The fifth Tokugawa *shōgun* (head of the *bakufu*), Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), and the second *daimyō* (domain lord) of the Mito domain, Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1701), were both representative Sinophiles. Tsunayoshi was engrossed in the study of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes). Over a period of eight years, he chaired the *Yijing* public lecture series two hundred and forty times, inviting courtiers, retainers, Confucians, Buddhist monks, Shinto priests, merchants, and commoners to attend.¹² Mitsukuni treated the Ming refugee scholar Zhu Shunshui (1600–82) with great respect, following his advice to promote Confucian education, start the wearing of Ming court costumes, build a Confucian temple, and construct the “West Lake embankment” in Edo’s Koshikawa Kōrakuen Garden.¹³

Tokugawa Confucians were confident in their ability to read Confucian classics, but they sought advice and recognition from Chinese scholars in the areas of *kanshi* (Chinese-style poetry), calligraphy, and drawing. Composing *kanshi* was a common pastime in the Tokugawa period, and Japanese wrote more Chinese-style poems than Japanese-style poems.¹⁴ Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725), a *bakufu* advisor and historian, attempted to send

his Chinese poems to China for suggestions on how to improve them. Most Tokugawa calligraphers preferred *karayō* (Chinese style) to *wayō* (Japanese style), and model calligraphy inscriptions from the Tang and Song dynasties were the most popular. Some went to Nagasaki to study calligraphy under Chinese monks or scholars. Works by Chinese Ōbaku Zen monks were highly esteemed.¹⁵

To most Tokugawa Japanese, China was unreachable. Their only sources of contact were Chinese immigrants, including monks, merchants, and *Tōtsūji* (Chinese interpreters), in Nagasaki. Chen Yuanyun (1587–1671), Yinyuan Longqi (1592–1673), Zhu Shunshui, and Shen Nanping (1682–?) were little known in Ming-Qing China, but etched their names into Japanese history. Chen Yuanyun was invited by Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600–50), the first *daimyō* of the Owari domain, to move to Edo, where he taught samurai martial arts. Yinyuan Longqi was the founder of the Ōbaku school of Zen Buddhism in Japan. The emperor, courtiers, *bakufu* retainers, *daimyō*, and merchants all came to study Buddhism under him. Zhu Shunshui was an influential figure in Tokugawa Confucianism and historiography. Though not a man of letters, he was often asked by Japanese scholars to comment on their Chinese-style poems. His *bitsudan* (written dialogues) contain many discussions of Chinese-style poetry. Shen Nanping taught the Japanese bird-and-flower painting during his two-year stay in Nagasaki.

When Tokugawa Japanese could not find Chinese sojourners in Nagasaki, they knocked at the doors of Chinese interpreters descended from Chinese immigrants. For example, Ogyū Sorai learned modern colloquial Chinese from Okajima Kanzan (1674–1728).¹⁶ Kumashiro Yūhi (1713–72), the most important disciple of Shen Nanping in Nagasaki, became a leading figure and influential teacher of painting. Hayashi Dōei's (1640–1708) calligraphy and Ga Chōshin's (1628–86) seven-stringed zither skills also attracted students.¹⁷ Although Chinese interpreters were low-ranking officials, they were respected as the spokespersons for Chinese culture.

The interest in China among Tokugawa intellectuals was genuine and ardent. Chinese culture continued to inspire the Japanese in all walks of life. In particular, many Tokugawa Confucians regarded the Chinese as their mentors, sharing a common identity with the Chinese as members of the Confucian tradition in East Asia.

CHINA AS “THE OTHER”

China meant different things to different people in the Tokugawa period, being regarded as a model by Sinophiles, and as “the Other” by nativists. The attitudes of Tokugawa Japanese toward China were often complicated and ambivalent. Confucians worshipped the ways of the ancient Chinese sages, but tended to look down upon the Qing dynasty under the Manchus. Many believed that Confucian traditions were faithfully implemented in Tokugawa Japan, whereas they had been forgotten in Qing China. According to the concept of *kai hentai*, Japan had replaced China as the center of Confucian civilization. Yamaga Sokō (1622–85), a Confucian and strategist, pointed out that Japan had surpassed China in terms of its geography, political morality, religion, literacy, and military arts, and thus only Japan deserved to be called *Chūka* and *Chūgoku*. He explained:

Regarding the movement of heaven and earth and the four seasons, if these reach a balance, wind and rain and cold and heat will not disappear. The soil will turn fertile and the people will become clever. One may then speak of *Chūgoku*. In the whole world, only *honchō* [our dynasty] and *gaichō* [foreign dynasty, i.e., China] have achieved this balance. In the Age of the Gods, Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi-no-Kami [the God of Creation] and the two divinities of creation [Izanami and Izanagi] shaped our nation in the [area of the] central pillar. Hence, it is natural to call our nation *Chūgoku*. This is why our nation has the divine and unbroken lineage of the imperial family and enjoys superiority in literacy and military arts.¹⁸

Likewise, Tokugawa Mitsukuni also maintained that the Japanese political tradition of maintaining the unbroken lineage of the imperial family reigning over the nation was superior to Chinese political tradition of revolution, and therefore only Japan would deserve to be called *Chūka*. He said: “According to *Morokoshi* [China], the Chinese call their nation *Chūka*. We Japanese should not follow that. We should call the capital of Japan *Chūka*. Why do we call a foreign nation *Chūka*?”¹⁹

Tokugawa Confucians were torn in their views of China between seeing it as a model and as “the Other,” and scholars of *kokugaku* (nativist learning),

Shinto, the Kimon school, and the late Mito school often saw China in a negative light. By condemning China as “the Other,” they constructed their own nativist identities. Unlike Tokugawa Confucians, who remained respectful to ancient Chinese sages, they denied the entire cultural heritage from the Three Dynasties to the Ming-Qing. For example, the *kokugaku* scholar Kamo Mabuchi (1697–1769) demonized China to underline the supreme quality of Japan:

China is the land of evil intentions. Education can make it look good on the surface, but it remains evil inside. Social unrest is unavoidable. Japan is a simple nation. Although our people receive little education, they are obedient. Following the principle of heaven and earth, our people can do without education.²⁰

The *kokugaku* master Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) condemned the ancient Chinese sages for establishing Confucian morality and profound philosophy to fool the people and to rule over them. In his comparison of the political traditions in Japan and China, China served as “the Other” to underscore the superiority and uniqueness of Japan’s nationality. For instance, he pointed out that the unbroken lineage of the imperial family brought peace and stability to Japan, whereas revolution caused chaos and social unrest in China. Sharing the same Chinese character, the Japanese term *shintō* and the Chinese term *shentao* invited comparison. Norinaga differentiated the two terms as follows:

A book of the Tang [*Yijing*] reads: “The sages established *shentao*.” Some people thus believe that our nation borrowed the name “Shinto” from it. These people do not have a mind to understand the principles of things. The meaning of our deities has been different from that nation from the beginning. In that nation, people apply the concept of *yin* and *yang* to explain deities, spirits, and the universe. Their discussion is only empty theory without substance. Deities in our imperial nation were the ancestors of the current imperial emperor, and thus [Japanese Shinto] is by no means empty theory.²¹

Sasaki Takanari, a scholar of the Kimon school, referred to China as a *kakoku* (inferior nation): “The customs of *Seido* [Western Land] are radical and dirty. It is an inferior nation in which *yin* and *yang* are either excessive

or insufficient. It has been a land of beasts since its foundation. Our nation is a land of deities, having moral standards and a good balance between *yin* and *yang*.”²²

Fukagawa Yūei (1695–1768), a Shinto priest, looked down upon the Chinese, calling them *Hani* (Han barbarians) because they did not implement the ways of loyalty and filial piety. He held that only Japan was entitled to the name *Chūgoku* or *Chūka*:

That nation calls itself *Chūka* and our imperial nation a barbarian [nation]. Indeed, only our nation deserves to be called *Chūka* and *Chūgoku*. That nation is nothing but barbaric. . . . We should uphold the dignity of our imperial nation. However, many Confucians nowadays call the nation of *Hani Chūka*, *Chūgoku*, or a nation of sages and gentlemen, but refer to our imperial nation as a nation of barbarians without manners and principles.²³

It is interesting to note that in Tokugawa discourse, China was an amorphous concept, being an imaginary model for Tokugawa Sinophiles and a metaphor of otherness in the eyes of the nativists.²⁴ Throughout Tokugawa history, China was gradually marginalized in the worldview of the Japanese.²⁵ In the last decades of the Tokugawa period, Qing China became a negative example. China and the Chinese were disdainfully called *Shina* (derogatory term for China) and *chankoro* (derogatory term for the Chinese), respectively. De-Confucianization and de-Sinicization were in full swing, smoothing the way for the rise of the notion of *datsu-A ron* (escaping from Asia) in modern Japan.²⁶

CHINA AS A SET OF BUILDING BLOCKS

Seeing China as a role model or as “the Other” were two major Tokugawa perceptions of China. Regarding the role of China in the making of Tokugawa thought and culture, China served as a collection of building blocks. Rather than copying faithfully from the Chinese, Tokugawa Japanese used Chinese elements to build and enrich their own thought and culture. Naitō Konan (1866–1934), a leading Sinologist in prewar Japan, used the making of tofu as a metaphor to describe how Japanese elements (soybean milk) and Chinese elements (coagulant) were mixed to forge Japanese culture (tofu):

Japanese scholars use a tree to explain the birth of Japanese culture. The seed has been there for a long time. Chinese culture provides the nutrients for the tree to grow. I would like to compare it to making tofu. The bean liquid is there, but it requires something to condense. Chinese culture is the coagulant that can make it firm.²⁷

Konan argued that many things have existed in Japan for a long time, but they did not have a name or concept, and thus the Japanese use Chinese terms and ideas to explain Japan's indigenous culture. He used loyalty and filial piety as an example:

Undoubtedly, *chū* [loyalty] and *kō* [filial piety] are terms imported from China, but Japan already possessed the virtues of loyalty and filial piety. There is a tendency [for the Japanese] to use imported Chinese terms to explain what Japan already has.²⁸

Takeuchi Yoshio (1886–1966), a disciple of Konan, expressed a similar view in his discussion of the nature and function of Confucianism in Japan. He suggested that Confucianism provided a platform for Tokugawa scholars to explain and elaborate upon Japanese values.²⁹ For example, Tokugawa Japanese put emphasis on the virtue of *cheng* (sincerity) because it was in accordance with the spirit of Shinto. Bitō Masahide (1923–2013), a scholar of Tokugawa intellectual history, pointed out that Tokugawa Confucianism was actually Japanized Confucianism that used imported Chinese terms to promote indigenous thought.³⁰

Aside from cultural appropriation, another use of Chinese culture as a set of building blocks was hybridization. Inoue Tetsujirō (1856–1944), a semi-official philosopher who published Tokugawa Confucian writings to promote traditional values, identified early Tokugawa Confucianism as an eclectic synthesis that fused the Cheng-Zhu school, the Lu-Wang school, Confucian classics, history, literature, Buddhism, Shinto, Daoism, and *wagaku* (Japanese learning) together.³¹ Kurozumi Makoto, a specialist in Tokugawa intellectual history, has also highlighted eclecticism as the major feature of Tokugawa thought, seeing its history as the process of fusing Chinese, Shinto, Buddhist, and Western elements.³²

In the processes of cultural appropriation and hybridization, Chinese culture, together with Western, Indian, and indigenous cultures, provided

Tokugawa Japanese with building blocks to construct their own thought and culture. The same Chinese terms could mean different things in Qing China and Tokugawa Japan. This can be observed in the ways in which Tokugawa Japanese reinterpreted Chinese legends, Confucian classics, and historical terms. These three components constitute the basic narrative structure and analytical framework of this research.

Part 1 of this book examines the naturalization of Chinese legends in Tokugawa Japan. Wu Taibo, Xu Fu, and Yang Guifei (719–56) were household names in Japan. Their images and legends in Japan were different from their prototypes in China, used to glorify Japan rather than China, showing a rise of nativist consciousness among Tokugawa Japanese.

Wu Taibo was transformed from a Chinese sage into the ancestor of the Japanese imperial family. This idea was supported by Fujiwara Seika, Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), and Nakae Tōju (1608–48). Hayashi Gahō (1618–80) praised Taibo for preserving the way of the sages in Japan as the imperial ancestor. Kumazawa Banzan speculated that Taibo was the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu-Ōmikami, the most important Shinto deity and the divine ancestor of the imperial family:

Descended from Zhou, Japan is thus named *Tōkai himeshi no kuni* [nation of Ji in the Eastern Sea]. It is the name for females, and in Japan we call females *hime*. *Hime* is the honorific term for women and the surname of Zhou. Amaterasu was Taibo. The statue of Uhōdōji [Rainmaking Boy] was made in the image of Amaterasu, reflecting the image of Taibo and the haircutting customs of Wu. Japanese clothing is called *gofuku* and utensils are *goki*. These are all related to the state of Wu [*go* in Japanese].³³

The advocates of Wu Taibo as the imperial ancestor sought to give Japan a respectable place in the Confucian order, as the Japanese were no longer eastern barbarians, but descendants of an ancient Chinese sage and preservers of the way of the sages. Associating Taibo with Shinto legend was an expression of the syncretism of Shinto and Confucianism in the Tokugawa period.

The legend of Xu Fu reached its apex in the Tokugawa period. More than twenty places in Japan claimed to have legacies of Xu Fu, and many Tokugawa writings mentioned Xu, who was merely a Qin sorcerer in the eyes of the Chinese. Tokugawa Japanese regarded him as either the transmitter of

Chinese culture or a political refugee. These two views seem to have represented the competition between Sinophiles and nativists, but they were indeed only differing expressions of Japanese identity. Hayashi Razan, Kumazawa Banzan, and Arai Hakuseki saw Xu as the transmitter of ancient Chinese culture, praising him for bringing pre-Qin texts, morality, and advanced technologies to Japan. Banzan remarked: “Xu Fu introduced Confucian morality, public manners, and various institutions. He found refuge in Japan and settled down here with thousands of followers. Although some Chinese classics disappeared in China, they survived overseas.”³⁴ Matsushita Kenrin (1637–1703), Ono Takakiyo (1747–1817), and Satō Setsudō (1797–1865) portrayed Xu as a political refugee who found his ideal nation in Japan. Kenrin wrote: “Xu Fu saw the national glory of Japan and came to settle down there. He escaped from the Qin, the land of tigers and leopards, and died in Japan as a deity.”³⁵ The use of Xu Fu to glorify Japan was a very original idea, and represents a good example of the localization of Chinese culture. The Xu Fu legend was mixed with Japanese Shinto mythology and folklore in Tokugawa writings.

The Chinese beauty Yang Guifei was seen as the manifestation of a Shinto deity. According to some medieval and early modern Japanese texts, Shinto deities sent Atsuta Myōjin to take the form of Yang Guifei to infatuate Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (685–762) so that he would forget his plan to invade Japan. When Yang died, the spirit of Atsuta Myōjin returned to Atsuta Shrine. The *jōruri* play *Yōkihi monogatari* (1663) fabricated a dialogue between Emperor Xuanzong and the great poet Bai Juyi (772–846). Bai chastised the emperor in the following terms:

Your Majesty, you are the cause of this misfortune. Your obsession with Yang Guifei’s beauty has caused all of the chaos. There is a country called Japan in the East. Yang Guifei was its Atsuta Myōjin. She was born in our nation as a woman provisionally to create troubles. Shame on her!³⁶

Kanō school painter Kanō Einō (1631–97) further added that many evil characters in Tang China were indeed Japanese deities who transformed into Chinese in order to save Japan from invasion. He wrote:

It is said that, in the Tang era, Japan frequently paid tribute to China. When the gifts were few, the Chinese killed the Japanese envoys.

Xuanzong sought to annihilate Japan. Atsuta Myōjin was Yamato-Takeru-no-Mikoto. This deity transformed into Yang Guifei, Sumiyoshi Myōjin turned into An Lushan, and Kumano-no-Ōkami turned into Yang Guozhong. They went to Tang China to destroy Xuanzong.³⁷

Yang Guifei as the manifestation of a Shinto deity was the Shinto version of the doctrine of *honji suijaku* (Japanese deities were manifestations of the Buddha or bodhisattvas) and an expression of *gokoku* (the protection and prosperity of the state). Yang was considered an evil beauty in the eyes of the Chinese, but was respected by some Japanese as a guardian deity or protector of Japan.

Part 2 looks into the appropriation of Confucian classics among Tokugawa scholars to advocate Japanese ideas. Confucian classics were popular readings among Tokugawa scholars from different schools of thought and religion. In order to accommodate Confucian values into the Tokugawa system and Japanese tradition, Tokugawa Japanese interpreted Confucian classics in their own ways to promote Japanese indigenous values, rather than original Chinese teachings.

The *Mengzi* (Sayings of Mencius) was not held in high esteem among Tokugawa scholars, as its ideas were not always in agreement with Japanese political tradition and the Tokugawa system of government. In particular, the notions of revolution and regicide were considered incompatible, dangerous, and disloyal. The Kimon school, the Sorai school, *kokugaku*, and the late Mito school were critical of the text. Although the *Mengzi* contains many relatively liberal political ideas, it was used by Yoshida Shōin (1830–59) to advocate conservative political ideology. For instance, he reinterpreted *tenmei* (mandate of heaven) as “the order of the *tennō* [Japanese emperor].” Receiving the mandate of heaven meant being appointed by the imperial family to be the *shōgun*, and the emperor could take this mandate away if the *shōgun* failed to carry out his duties. Shōin gave the Edo *bakufu* a most serious warning: “Posts like that of *shōgun* are appointed by the imperial court only for those who can carry out the duties of those posts. If the *shōgun* shirks his duties like the Ashikaga house did, he should be sacked immediately.”³⁸

The *Xiaojing* (Classic of Filial Piety) is a book about filial piety, but it was used to promote loyalty in Tokugawa Japan. Tokugawa samurai ethics put loyalty before filial piety. The *bakufu* preferred the *guwen* (old-script edition) of the *Xiaojing*, which underlines the absolute authority of the ruler. Hayashi

Razan, in his *Kobun kōkyō genkai* (Colloquial Explanation of the *Xiaojing* in the Old-Script Text), restated the famous saying in the preface by Kong Anguo: “Even if the emperor does not behave like an emperor, his minister cannot be disloyal. Even if the father does not behave like a father, his son cannot be unfilial.” In terms of *wulun* or *wujiao* (the order of the five constant relations), many Zhu Xi school scholars and Mito school scholars put the ruler-subject relation prior to that of the father-son relation.³⁹

The *Yijing* was localized in Tokugawa Japan, used by nativists to expound Shinto ideas. The Shintoist Watarai Nobuyoshi (1615–90) explained the history of the Age of the Gods and Shinto thought in terms of *Yijing*-related concepts such as *taiji* (the Supreme Ultimate), *yin-yang wu-xing* (two primal forces and five phases), *sancai* (three spheres of nature), and the hexagrams. The *kokugaku* thinker Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) and his disciples turned the *Yijing* from a Confucian classic into a Shinto text, maintaining that Fu Xi, according to tradition the creator of the eight trigrams, was the manifestation of the Shinto deity Ōmononushi-no-Kami, who went to China in antiquity to cultivate the Chinese:

Paoxishi is also called Taiho Fu Xi Shi. He was actually Ōmononushi-no-Kami, a deity of our divine nation of Fusō. He went to ancient China to exploit its land and became the emperor. He taught its foolish people the ways of heaven, earth, and humanity. By observing the changes of the universe and everything, he created the eight trigrams.⁴⁰

Atsutane saw the *Zhouyi* as a corrupt version of the *Yijing*, condemning King Wen for distorting the text and changing the order of the sixty-four hexagrams and the number of yarrow stalks to justify the revolution that overthrew the Shang dynasty. His academic mission was to restore the original *Yijing*. Regarding the *Yijing* as a Shinto text, scholars of the Hirata school used its related ideas to explicate Shinto and carry out divination for agriculture.

Part 3 documents how Chinese historical terms were redefined in Tokugawa Japan. Many imported Chinese terms were interpreted and used differently. Names for China, *bakufu*, and *shōgun*, as well as the discussion of legitimacy in Tokugawa historiography, are all examples of how meanings of Chinese terms could be adjusted to express Japanese values and feelings.

Following the rise of the theory of *kai hentai* and the Japanese version of the Sinocentric world order, some Tokugawa Japanese applied honorific

names originally reserved for China to Japan. Yamaga Sokō, in his last years, referred to Japan as *Chūka*. He remarked: “How foolish I was! Born in *Chūka* [Japan], but failing to understand its beauty, I was absorbed in the classics of *gaichō* [China] and admired its people. How absent-minded I was! How lost I was!”⁴¹ The historian Rai Sanyō (1781–1832) called Japan *Chūgoku* and *Chūchō* (Central Dynasty) in his *Shinsaku* (New Proposal; 1804). The Mito scholar Aizawa Seishisai (1781–1863) referred to Japan as *Chūgoku* and *Shinshū* (Divine Land) in his *Shinron* (New Thesis; 1825).

Honorific titles for the Edo *bakufu* and *shōgun* (such as *kōgi*, *kubō*, *chōtei*, *taikun*, *denka*, and *kinchū*) were mostly imported Chinese terms that at first applied to the Kyoto court and the emperor. In the last decades of the Tokugawa period, many titles that the *bakufu* and *shōgun* had acquired from the court were restored to their original meanings and usage. The Mito scholar Fujita Tōko (1806–55) insisted that titles for the imperial court should not be applied to the Edo *bakufu*: “The innocent people refer to the *bakufu* as the *chōtei* [central court government], and some even use the word *ō* [king].”⁴²

Tokugawa historians created their own concepts of legitimacy (such as the imperial regalia theory) and redefined imported Chinese concepts (such as heaven’s mandate) to rationalize Tokugawa political realities. The *Dai Nihonshi* (History of Great Japan; started in 1657 and completed in 1906) claimed legitimacy for the Southern Court because it was the holder of the three imperial regalia. The regalia theory had a very strong impact on the Kimon school and the Mito school. Tokugawa Harutoshi (1773–1816), the seventh *daimyō* of the Mito domain, argued: “The conflict between the East and West, the civil war between the North and South, and the legitimacy of the imperial line can all be settled by the regalia.”⁴³ Also, the mandate of heaven was used in Tokugawa historical writings primarily to discuss the right to govern, and denied a Chinese-style system of “revolution” and dynastic change. This Japanese version of heaven’s mandate became an ideological tool to legitimize the *bakufu* as the de facto central government. Ironically, the same theory was applied to challenge the legitimacy of the *bakufu* in the *bakumatsu* period (late Tokugawa era, 1853–67). Yoshida Shōin warned: “The descendants of the Sun Goddess in our heavenly dynasty shine on the universe. If the *bakufu* does not follow the order of the heavenly dynasty and does not carry out its duty to repel the barbarians, the situation is called ‘using the state of Yan to fight against the state of Yan.’”⁴⁴

BEYOND A MODEL AND “THE OTHER”

China in the Tokugawa imagination was complicated and multifaceted. In understanding the China factor in Tokugawa culture, we should think beyond the traditional dialectical framework of model and “the Other.” China also functioned as a set of building blocks to construct Tokugawa culture. This tripartite conceptual framework helps to achieve a holistic understanding of the nature of Tokugawa culture. Sino-Japanese cultural exchange in the early modern period should be perceived as the process of interplay between the Japanization of Chinese culture and the Sinicization of Japanese culture. Tokugawa Japanese selectively introduced and then modified Chinese culture to make it fit into the Japanese tradition. Used largely as a collection of building blocks to construct Japanese culture, Chinese culture was highly localized and hybridized in Tokugawa Japan. In the name of *wakon kansai* (Japanese spirit and Chinese scholarship), Chinese terms and forms survived, but the substance and spirit became Japanese. Hence, it is simplistic and even misleading to see Tokugawa Confucianism or Chinese learning as an overseas branch of Chinese culture. Characterized by eclecticism and pragmatism, Chinese scholarship in Tokugawa Japan was different from Song-Ming neo-Confucianism or Qing textual criticism. Moreover, the China factor was influential in Tokugawa thought and culture in the sense that it was used extensively by the Japanese to express and reinforce Japanese ideas and values.