

Visual Power and Moral Influence: The Taku Confucius Temple and its Chinese Counterparts

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Introduction

The Confucius temple (known by various names in Chinese and Japanese, such as *Kongmiao* / *Kōbyō* 孔廟, *Wenmiao* / *Bunbyō* 文廟, *Dacheng dian* / *Taiseiden* 大成殿, *Sheng tang* / *Seidō* 聖堂) was to a greater or lesser extent found across much of pre-modern East Asia. To what degree it should be regarded as a religious institution has been a matter of debate in the West since the time of the first Jesuit missionaries in China, linked to the wider question of whether Confucianism itself should be regarded as a religion.⁽¹⁾ This debate continues, with the case for its being rather more like a religion than a secular philosophy seeming to gain ground.⁽²⁾ However one approaches this larger question (which seems to depend a great deal on how one defines “religion”), there is no denying that the Confucius temple looks like a religious building, is recognizable as such across the countries of East Asia, and serves as a venue for sacrificial rituals of obviously religious character. How do we account for this phenomenon, and what

1 See the discussion in Thomas A. Wilson ed., *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 217 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), especially pp. 3–21.

2 See, for example, Rodney L. Taylor, *The Religious Dimensions of Confucianism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Taylor, “The Religious Character of the Confucian Tradition,” *Philosophy East and West* 48.1, The Religious Dimension of Confucianism in Japan (1998), pp. 80–107; Barend Ter Haar, “The Invention of Confucianism in the Nineteenth Century,” paper for the Workshop on Religion and Area Studies, Leiden, 22 September 2014.

does it contribute to our understanding of what Confucianism is? What, in the minds of its builders and users, was it for?

Scholarly attention thus far seems to have concentrated less on the temple itself, and more on the cult to Confucius centred around it, the person of Confucius as a sage or deity made into the object of worship, the sacrificial observances to him (the Shidian 釋奠 / Sekiten 釈奠 or Shicai 釋菜 / Sekisai 釈菜), and his images and iconography.⁽³⁾ There are studies of the Confucius temple as a standard component of schools, but the context has been primarily the history of education rather than the specific function of the temple.⁽⁴⁾ The temple itself as it existed across East Asia, particularly its intended function, its visuality and materiality, and how it was viewed by the general populace, need further consideration.⁽⁵⁾

The current study will consider this problem in the light of one single example, a well-known Confucius temple in Japan, one still in use today as a centre of living ritual activity, at Taku 多久 in Kyushu. Originally founded during the Edo period by Taku Shigefumi 多久 茂文 (1669–1711; r. 1686–1711), lord of the sub-domain of Taku (Taku yū 多久 邑) in Saga domain, involving a major

3 See, for example, the various studies included in Wilson, *On Sacred Grounds*; and also Julia Murray's work on the pictorial images of Confucius: "Idols' in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius," *Journal of Asian Studies* 68.2 (2009), pp. 371–411; "Portraits of Confucius: Icons and Iconoclasm," *Oriental Art* 47.3 (2001), pp. 17–28; "The Temple of Confucius and Pictorial Biographies of the Sage," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55.2 (1996), pp. 269–300.

4 For example Ishikawa Ken 石川 謙, *Nihon gakkōshi no kenkyū* 日本学校史の研究 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1960); Gao Mingshi 高明士, *Dong Ya chuantong jiaoyu yu xueli xuegui* 東亞傳統教育與學禮學規 (Taipei: Taiwan Daxue Chuban Zhongxin, 2005); Wajima Yoshio 和島 芳男, *Shōheikō to hangaku* 昌平校と藩学 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1962, rev. ed. 1966); Suzuki Miyao 鈴木 三八男, *Seidō monogatari: Yushima Seidō ryaku shi* 聖堂物語: 湯島聖堂略志 (Tokyo: Shibunkai, 1989).

5 The physical layout of the typical Confucius temple in China is briefly described in Wilson, *On Sacred Grounds*, pp. 2–3.

construction project lasting at least six years to 1708 and costing one third of the sub-domain tax revenue during this time. The emphasis will be not on the architecture of the structure itself, but rather on what was in the minds of its creators, what they envisioned the temple would be and how it would function. Fortunately, surviving sources give us insights into how this project came about, including Shigefumi's own account of the background context of the temple in China and Japan as he understood it, and his motivations for building it.

In what follows, we will trace the founding of the Taku Confucius temple against the overall background of the spread of Confucianism and the Confucius temple during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, especially through contemporary writings which shed light on the specific environment in which the Taku temple was built. These include Taku Shigefumi's "Record on the Confucius Temple" ("Bunbyōki" 文廟記) and other primary documents by others connected to the project, and other sources relating to events in Edo and Saga which directly influenced Taku. We will consider the significance of the Taku temple's founding within the context of Confucian transmission as a clear example of transculturation, the creation of an artefact introduced from another culture but refashioned according to the needs and priorities of the host culture.

Comparison of the role of the Taku temple with its counterpart in China, which was inevitably different in certain key respects, reveals certain material and behavioural elements of Confucianism that are more universal, and universalizing, than others; these include the visual and material characteristics of Confucian material culture which evoke responses from those among the wider population not educated in the Confucian textual canon. In Confucianism, such elements come under the wider heading of *li* 禮, with the idea that they may be deployed by enlightened rulers as a civilizing force to effect the cultural transformation of their populations. *Li* is also applied in Confucian discourse as a measure or marker of civilization itself, which was thought to have reached different levels in the countries of East Asia, and it was seen as playing a role in the

transmission of Confucianism across cultural boundaries.⁽⁶⁾ The fundamental transformative effect of *li* is also deployed in the early stages of the children's education.⁽⁷⁾ Shigefumi, who seems to have had a good command of Confucian learning and discourse, chose to implement the universal tenets of *li* in a quite specific way to suit his own governance aims in Taku, and attached a significance to his temple not found in China, nor to quite the same extent – or perhaps less explicitly – in other Confucius temples in Japan. This is a good example of how transculturation works, and helps explain why Shigefumi was so successful in creating a vector of living cultural transmission that has continued right down to the present day.

The Background

Previous scholarship on the Japanese Confucius temple has mostly looked at it within the context of Confucian education, especially its connection with Confucian schools, and not given much consideration to its function as a religious building.⁽⁸⁾ There are of course detailed studies of the Sekiten and Sekisai sacrifices to Confucius, but these have less to say about the wider function of the temple itself.⁽⁹⁾

6 See Robert Chard, "Patterns of Confucian Cultural Transmission as Reflected in the Self-Perception of Zhu Shunshui in Japan," *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 (Memoirs of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia) 166 (December 2014), pp. 284–247, especially p. 271.

7 See for example Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Education Through Ritual: Efforts to Formulate Family Rituals During the Sung Period," in William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee eds., *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 277–306.

8 For example, Ishikawa Ken, *Nihon gakkōshi no kenkyū*; Suzuki Miyao, *Seidō monogatari: Yushima Seidō ryaku shi*; Wajima Yoshio, *Shōheikō to hangaku*.

9 One of the most comprehensive studies of the Sekiten is Sudō Toshio 須藤 敏夫, *Kinsei Nihon Sekiten no kenkyū* 近世日本釈奠の研究 (Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan,

There are various publications on the Taku temple, some of them published over the last three decades by the city of Taku, complete with illustrations and primary source text materials, which are useful for the current study.⁽¹⁰⁾ Worth particular mention is the work of Hosokawa Akira 細川 章, a librarian in the Taku local archive (Takushi Kyōdo Shiryōkan 多久市郷土資料館), who helped compile the Taku publications as well as producing studies of her own; she drew much of her material from original manuscript documents kept in the archive.⁽¹¹⁾

The previous study most directly linked to this article is a study of Shigefumi's "Bunbyōki" by Zenan Shu, in particular addressing how he conceived of the visual effect of the Confucius temple on the population of Taku, which he intended would encourage them to moral transformation along Confucian lines and induce them to govern themselves without external enforcement.⁽¹²⁾ The current study builds on the important groundwork laid in that article, both in terms of relevant background and conceptual analysis, and may be regarded as a

2001). In English, a book on the Sekiten in Japan by I. J. McMullen is forthcoming from Harvard University Press.

- 10 Takushi Kyōiku Inikai 多久市教育委員会 comp., *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō* 重要文化財多久聖廟 (Taku: Taku Shichō Yoshitsugi Masami 多久市長吉次正美, 1983); Takushi Kyōiku Inikai 多久市教育委員会 comp., *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō* 重要文化財多久聖廟 (Taku: Takushi Kyōiku Inikai, 1991; this has the same title as its 1983 predecessor, but is a different publication consisting mainly of colour photographs); Zaidan Hōjin Bunkazai Kenzōbutsu Hozon Gijutsu Kyōkai 財団法人文化財建造物保存技術協会 comp., *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō hozon shūri kōji hōkokusho* 重要文化財多久聖廟保存修理工事報告書 (Taku: Takushi, 1991); Takushi shi Hensan Inikai 多久市史編さん委員会 comp., *Takushi shi* 多久市史 (Taku: Takushi, 2002) vol. 2, section 7, "Takuryō no kyōiku to bunka 多久領の教育と文化."
- 11 Hosokawa Akira 細川 章, "Hizen Taku Seibyō no sōshisha Taku Shigefumi no ningenzō 肥前多久聖廟の創始者, 多久茂文の人間像," *Seinan chiikishi kenkyū* 西南地域史研究 7 (1992), pp. 555–72.
- 12 Zenan Shu, "Interpreting the Establishment of the Confucius Temple and School at Taku in Saga Domain," *Chiba Shōdai Kiyō* 千葉商大紀要 53.1 (2015), pp. 7–21.

continuation or an expansion of it.

In terms of the overall history of the Confucius temple in seventeenth and eighteenth century Japan, and of the Taku temple specifically, the most influential such temple was that founded by Hayashi Razan 林 羅山 (1583–1657) at his Confucian school at Shinobugaoka in 1632. The Hayashi school at that time did not have the official status it would later acquire, but the land for it, and a sum of money, had been given Razan by the Shōgun Iemitsu for the purpose, and the statue images for the temple were provided by Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川 義直 (1600–1650), lord of Owari, who had already founded a Confucius temple of his own in 1628.⁽¹³⁾ In 1691 the Hayashi school and temple achieved a significant enhancement of status when the Shōgun Tsunayoshi (1646–1709, r. 1680–1709) moved them to a new location as the Yushima Seidō 湯島聖堂. Taku Shigefumi seems to have conceived of founding a Confucian school and temple quite early on, certainly by the late 1680s,⁽¹⁴⁾ and the process of getting it built was directly influenced by events in Edo, cascading down through Saga domain to Taku.

A more general background factor behind the foundation of the Taku temple was the promotion of Confucianism in the circles of power in Edo and across Japan, which was already on the rise in the time of Ietsuna (1641–1680, r. 1651–1680), and became all the more active under Tsunayoshi, who made Confucianism an important part of his efforts to implement civil (*bun* 文) governance, and

13 See Zenan Shu, “Cultural and Political Encounters with Chinese Language in Early Modern Japan: The Case of Kinoshita Jun’an (1621–1698),” D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2009, pp. 105–6.

14 See Shu, “Interpreting the Establishment of the Confucius Temple,” pp. 9–10; *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō hozon shūri kōji hōkokusho*, pp. 3, 5. This latter source (p. 5) says that Shigefumi conceived the idea of building school and temple during the Jōkyō 貞享 reign period (1684–1688), and that he ordered images of Confucius and the four correlates in 1687. As is often the case in the Taku publications, the primary source documents in which this is recorded are not identified, but as the archivist Hosokawa Akira was a contributor, and had a detailed knowledge of the manuscripts in the local archive, these statements are likely to be reliable, and the same will be assumed below.

famously lectured on the Confucian canons to assemblies of daimyō and high officials.¹⁵ Other actors in the chain of influence on Shigefumi were a part of this Edo milieu: his father Nabeshima Mitsushige 鍋島 光茂 (1632–1700, r. 1657–1700), second lord of Saga, under whom Confucian learning was being taught, at least among some members of his family, providing the environment within which Shigefumi acquired a quite credible level of Confucian learning; his older half-brother Nabeshima Tsunashige 綱茂 (1652–1706, r. 1695–1706), third lord of Saga, who founded a Confucius temple of his own in Saga; and Hayashi Hōkō 林鳳岡 (1644–1732), the third head of the Hayashi family school, who had a close relationship with Tsunayoshi, became a friend of Tsunashige, and in 1715 composed a commemorative essay on the Taku temple four years after Shigefumi's death.

The key player in the story is of course Shigefumi himself. Hosokawa Akira has published an account of his life which helps us understand much about how why he came to construct the temple, and certain points relevant to the current study are worth summarizing here.

First are the circumstances of his birth. He was the third son of Nabeshima Mitsushige, second lord of Saga. Unlike his half-brothers Tsunashige (third lord of Saga), Yoshishige 吉茂 (1664–1730, r. 1707–1730, fourth lord of Saga), and Muneshige 宗茂 (1687–1754, r. 1730–1738, fifth lord of Saga), Shigefumi was not born of Mitsushige's principal wife. Nor did he know his mother, who died six days after giving birth to him. Before he was born, Taku Shigenori 茂矩 (?–1686), head of one of the subdivisions of the Ryūzōji 龍造寺 family and the then ruler of the Taku sub-domain, and a key supporter of Mitsushige, had recently lost his own son, and asked if he could adopt the child as his son and heir if it turned out to be a boy, to which Mitsushige agreed. Hosokawa argues that Shigefumi was

15 Beatrice Bodart-Bailey, who is correct to argue for Tsunayoshi's seriousness in the Confucian project as a practical means of achieving good government; see Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 73–4.

set apart from the beginning by not being a legitimate son of Mitsushige's principal wife, and, being adopted into the Taku family, he lived separately and was served by Taku retainers, though he remained in Saga until the age of twelve *sai*. All the same Mitsushige seems to have felt particular concern for the boy, even though by the end he had fathered no less than forty-nine children. He sent servants to check on him after earthquakes and thunderstorms, and on one occasion when Shigefumi became gravely ill both he and Shigenori sat at his bedside to care for him personally.⁽¹⁶⁾

Shigefumi was moved into the Taku residence in Saga at the age of ten *sai*, and at twelve *sai*, in 1680, he entered Taku for the first time. Shigenori had a natural son of his own in 1681, but made no change to Shigefumi's status as heir. In 1686 Mitsushige commanded Shigenori to retire, making way for Shigefumi to become the new lord of Taku at the age of eighteen *sai*. Hosokawa makes a convincing case that moving to Taku would have been a difficult experience for him. Taku was isolated, and would have seemed backward in comparison with Saga. Shigefumi's later comments about the need for Confucian moral transformation were likely influenced by his early experiences there. Some of the Taku elders, like other among the Ryūzōji clan and their vassals, resented the Nabeshima for supplanting the Ryūzōji, and now faced having a natural Nabeshima son as ruler. Shigefumi in his writings frequently mentions the lack of courtesy among his subordinates.⁽¹⁷⁾ In spite of all this, he took his responsibility as ruler seriously, and was determined to effect the moral transformation of his subjects through Confucian teachings.

Hosokawa also emphasizes the Confucian education Shigefumi received. This was of course alongside the martial training standard for someone of his class, but contemporary sources praise his liking and aptitude for the study of Confucian texts, and his emphasis on core virtues as opposed to philological

16 Hosokawa, "Hizen Taku Seibyō no sōshisha Taku Shigefumi no ningenzō," pp. 556–8.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 558–9.

textual detail.⁽¹⁸⁾ From this it is clear that Confucian learning was very much a part of his childhood environment. His older brother and third Saga lord Tsunashige was also proficient in Confucian learning, and, as we will see below, interacted closely with Hayashi Hōkō in Edo. More generally, a fair level of Confucian learning seems to have developed quite early in other Nabeshima-ruled domains. The ruler of Ogi 小城, Nabeshima Naoyoshi 直能 (1623–1689, r. 1654–1679), had in 1664 sent a young student Shimokawa Sansei 下川 三省 (1650–?) at the age of sixteen *sai* to Nagasaki to study with the Chinese émigré Zhu Shunshui 朱舜水, and Zhu records that he was impressed by the extent of Sansei's knowledge of the Confucian canon, and Chinese poetry.⁽¹⁹⁾ Hosokawa also identifies Shigefumi's first teacher as Sanematsu Genrin 実松 元琳 (1639–1726), and notes that he was also taught by Taketomi Tomosuke 武富 咸亮 (1637–1718), a merchant, and Confucian, descended from the refugee child of a Ming official. Tomosuke built a Confucius temple of his own, the Ootakara Seidō 大寶聖堂 in 1692, in which he installed a paper image of Confucius painted for him by Tsunashige. Tomosuke was Saga domain scholar during the time Shigefumi built the Taku temple, and Tsunashige assigned him to oversee the project and provide technical advice.⁽²⁰⁾

Studying under these teachers, Shigefumi seems to have acquired an extensive grounding in the Confucian canons, as is reflected in his apparent high level of command of Confucian discourse and Classical Chinese more generally apparent in the “Bunbyōki”, as will be discussed below.

18 This is in the memorial essay on the Taku temple by Taketomi Hidesuke 武富 英亮, in *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 7; this document will be presented in greater detail below.

19 A study of Shimokawa Sansei can be found in Shu Zenan, “Hanju Shimokawa Sansei no tōyō ni miru Ogi-han kangaku kyōiku no tansho 藩儒下川三省の登用にみる小城藩漢学教育の端緒,” *Chiba Shōdai Kiyō* 千葉商大紀要 52:1 (2014), pp. 47–63.

20 *Ibid.* For Taketomi Tomosuke's background see Shu, “Interpreting the Establishment of the Confucius Temple,” p. 11.

Establishing a Confucian school and temple was a high priority for Shigefumi, but perhaps because this was not something he was able to do formally on his own authority, he moved only gradually toward his goal. There seems to be no clear record of exactly when his Tōgen shōsha 東原庵 school was formally established. We do know that in 1692 his brother Tsunashige gave him a plaque on which he had written “Gakumonjo” 学問所 (‘place of study’, ‘school’), which was the same year that Shigefumi summoned Kawanami Ji’an 河浪自安 (1635–1719) to Taku, and chose the future site of the school and temple at Mount Shiiharu 椎原山.⁽²¹⁾ Ji’an was teaching students privately in his own home by 1699, if not sooner, and this teaching seems to have moved into the school once it was built.⁽²²⁾ Shigefumi himself also taught students in his home when duties permitted, and he set up a private shrine to Confucius where he performed the Sekisai.⁽²³⁾ Shigefumi’s chronological biography also records that the school was established in 1699.⁽²⁴⁾ Another clear date is the ninth month of 1701, when Shigefumi received the bronze statue image of Confucius which Nakamura Tekisai had made for him in Kyoto, and established it in a temporary building next to the school, as the temple building itself was not yet finished, which suggests that the school itself was formally in place by this time.⁽²⁵⁾

The actual construction of the temple took until 1708. Records state that one third of the tax income of the whole of Taku went into the project, and 9222 workmen are listed as having been involved.⁽²⁶⁾ Under the rules laid down by Shigefumi, the workmen were not allowed to drink alcohol, or to laugh or joke

21 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 1; *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō hozon shūri kōji hōkokusho*, p. 5.

22 Shu, “Interpreting the Establishment of the Confucius Temple,” p. 8.

23 According to Taketomi Hidesuke, see below.

24 Hosokawa, “Hizen Taku Seibyō no sōshisha Taku Shigefumi no ningenzō,” p. 557, nt. 37; *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 25.

25 Recorded by Shigefumi himself in his “Bunbyōki”, *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 5.

26 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, pp. 39 and 51 (the latter is a transcription of an original document giving the figure as 9224).

loudly.⁽²⁷⁾ Contemporary sources state that the building was “Chinese” in appearance, though modern architecture specialists state that it is in fact entirely Japanese in construction, and conclude that Shigefumi and his associates wanted it to look Chinese, but in the absence of actual Chinese buildings to use as a model, they could only depend on textual descriptions and their own imaginations.⁽²⁸⁾ Even if not genuinely Chinese in appearance, there can be little doubt that it would have looked unusual and exotic to the people of Taku at the time.

Two Primary Source Texts: the “Bunbyōki” 文廟記 and “Kakusan shoin senza ki” 鶴山書院遷座記

We will here examine more closely two documents written by people involved in the establishment of the temple, primarily Shigefumi himself, but also Taketomi Hidesuke, who composed a commemorative essay of his own dated seven days after Shigefumi’s piece. Hidesuke was the son of Taketomi Tomosuke, who had been a teacher to Shigefumi in his youth, and who helped design the Taku temple.

The original manuscript of the “Bunbyōki” in Shigefumi’s own hand is preserved in the Taku local archive, and it is transcribed in moveable type among the materials published by Taku city.⁽²⁹⁾ The greater part of the document is the text of an invocation to Confucius and correlates, imploring them to lend their spiritual power in support of Shigefumi’s project to bring about the moral

27 Documents reproduced in *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō hozon shūri kōji hōkokusho*, pp. 69–70.

28 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 39.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6. This version is punctuated and easier to read, but contains textual errors, most of which are corrected in a table of corrigenda at the beginning of the volume. The original is in the form of a scroll, and of course unpaginated, part of which is shown in an illustration in the colour *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō* (1991), p. 2. In the following the original scroll is used as the base text, with citations to the typeset version for convenience.

transformation of Taku, which he describes as an ignorant backwater. A preamble explains that the invocation was to be delivered by the school teacher Kawanami Ji'an during the Sekisai conducted when the bronze statue of Confucius was installed in its temporary home next to the school in the ninth month of 1701. Hidesuke's document makes clear that Shigefumi was present at this Sekisai ceremony, even though he did not deliver the invocation himself.

Shigefumi's "Bunbyōki" has been presented and analyzed in some detail in the study by Zenan Shu, which the reader may consult; here we will do no more than briefly summarize this earlier work, and concentrate on developing further points relevant to the current study.⁽³⁰⁾ Shu identifies four major themes in Shigefumi's account of why he was building the temple. First is his own sense of responsibility as a ruler in responding to the poor state of Confucian learning in Taku; he felt that this responsibility was to both govern and educate the people, and that neither side of this dual role could take precedence over the other. Second, he describes the temple itself as a visual focus of attention, that would awaken feelings of reverence (*kei* 敬) in those who viewed it. With these feelings of reverence, they would be inspired toward virtue; if there were no temple for them to look at, they would not have feelings of reverence, would not be virtuous, and become like birds and beasts.⁽³¹⁾ Third, Shigefumi understood Confucianism as a system of virtues, which people would be inspired to cultivate because they would look at the Confucius temple and understand that it, and the deity within it, represented the Confucian virtues.⁽³²⁾ Fourth, Shigefumi wished to perfect civil (*bun* 文) governance, ruling by moral guidance so that the people would be transformed through the Confucian virtues and thus govern themselves without any need for external enforcement. In all of this he is quite explicit that the example for this way of governance had been set by Tsunayoshi in Edo, emulated

30 Shu, "Interpreting the Establishment of the Confucius Temple," especially pp. 14–19.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

32 *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

by Tsunashige in Saga, and finally implemented in Taku.⁽³³⁾

Following on from Shu's account and analysis, we will here add a few further points about this text and what it tells us. First, it is written in *kanbun* which reads very well as Classical Chinese. *Kunten* marks are provided, but are small and lightly written, and it is not possible to tell whether they were part of the original document or added later. There are numerous allusions to Confucian canonical texts: the *Lunyu* 論語, the *Liji* 禮記, *Yijing* 易經, and *Xiaojing* 孝經. We cannot prove conclusively that Shigefumi did not have help in composing or editing the text, but it certainly looks as though he had an excellent command of the Confucian textual canon.

A second point is that in Chinese texts discussing the educative and civilizing effects of Confucian teachings, especially across society as a whole, one would expect emphasis on the frequent use of the core concept of *li* 禮, 'ritual propriety'. And, the branch of learning dedicated to the study of *li* is what governs the Confucius temple and the rituals performed in it. Yet Shigefumi does not use the word *rei/li* in the "Bunbyōki" at all. We do find one clear allusion to *li* based on the *Lunyu*, when Shigefumi uses the phrase "get rid of sacrificing the sheep" (*qi xi yang* 去餼羊) as part of his description of how Confucian learning was failing to take hold in Taku despite his best efforts; in the *Lunyu* the phrase is explicitly linked to the word *li* in the sense of a proper ritual which should not be changed.⁽³⁴⁾ Rather, Shigefumi's emphasis is on 'veneration' (*kei*) as the core concept, but he does so in ways which closely parallel discourse on *li* in the Confucian canons. For example, he speaks of *kei* as a civilizing force, which distinguishes humans from beasts. This seems more a contrast of terminology than of substance, which

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

34 In this passage, Confucius comments on the intention of his disciple Zigong 子貢 to dispense with the sacrifice of a sheep at an ancestral sacrifice by saying, "Zigong, you begrudge the loss of the sheep; I begrudge the loss of the ritual" (賜也，爾愛其羊，我愛其禮), *Lunyu* 3.17. This is the "Ba yi" 八佾 section of the text, which seems to be almost entirely about *li*.

makes it all the more striking: the substance has been transmitted to Shigefumi's world by the medium of Confucian culture and canonical texts, and yet it seems that for Shigefumi the word *li* does not capture the essence of what he wants to say to a Japanese audience as well as *kei* does. We can see in this shift of discourse the process of transculturation, adjusting the terminology to suit the Japanese cultural context and making the message clearer and more effective.

A somewhat more subtle point is Shigefumi's use of the word *bun* 文, for the civil, non-martial arts, in the collocations *bun-kyō* 文教, 'civil teachings', and *bunmei* 文明, 'culture and enlightenment' or 'civil and enlightened culture'. Of course *wen* 文 in Chinese can be used in much the same way, or with the added sense of 'ritual regulations', but one is tempted to see in Shigefumi's *bun* the specific political tenor of the age, as expressed by Tsunayoshi in 1691 when he announced to daimyō and his officials that good government required the joint application of martial and civil (*bu* 武 and *bun*), and chided them for neglecting the latter as part of his justification for requiring them to attend his lectures on Confucian canons.⁽³⁵⁾ *Bun* would have had a resonance different from what it had in China, in more explicit and conspicuous opposition to the martial. Shigefumi attributes the chaos of the Warring States period in Japan to the loss of *bun-kyō*, the civil teachings, and the disappearance of the visible Confucius temple from the landscape.

The central role Shigefumi attributes to the visible Confucius temple itself in the success of Confucian civil teachings and the civilized order more generally is perhaps the most conspicuous element of his discourse that would not be found in Chinese sources. Shigefumi tells his story diachronically, a comparison of the history of the temple in China and Japan. From the original "true" temple to Confucius in Qufu, it had grown to more than 1560 official temples in the provinces throughout China, where where the formal twice-yearly sacrifices were

35 This is recorded in Hayashi Hōkō's autobiographical chronicle, see *Jisen* 自撰 (unpaginated autograph *kanbun* ms. of c. 1731 in the Waseda University Library), *jō* 上 – *ge* 下, Genroku year 3 (1690), 8th month.

conducted, and further that there were an uncountable number of smaller temples in villages and localities, such that Confucius temples were to be seen everywhere, inspiring people to study. Hence the supremacy of the Civil Way (*bundō* 文道) in China, and the great numbers of loyal and righteous men recorded in the histories. In Japan, he says, the story was different. In the time of the Daigakuryō 大学寮 academy, Japan had in no way been inferior to China in this regard. But as time passed the civil teachings fell into decline, and Confucius temples disappeared from the landscape. The devastating wars of the Warring States ensued, which Shigefumi lists one by one, and he uses the canonical Chinese term *luan chen zei zi* 亂臣賊子, ‘rebellious vassals and violent sons’, to describe the perpetrators. All knowledge of the Confucian virtues was lost.

But this unhappy state of affairs was reversed by the rise of Tsunayoshi, his founding of the Taiseiden 大成殿 (the Confucius temple at the new school complex at Yushima), and his personal lectures on the Confucian canons. The effect of the Taiseiden in changing customs among the people with miraculous speed is emphasized. The influence of this was transmitted to Saga, where the new lord (Tsunashige) made founding a Confucius temple a priority when he first entered his domain, which achieved transformative effects surpassing even those in Edo. Now, it is time for Shigefumi do the same in Taku: having received the benefit of cultural enlightenment (*bunmei*) himself, he must now bring the same to his people. Here he cites as a model the Chinese Han dynasty official Wen Weng 文翁 (187–110 BCE), whom he says founded a Temple to the Sage (Seibyō) in Shu (in modern Sichuan), which demonstrated his understanding of the needs of the remote and backward locality he governed, and his ability to inspire the people there to exert themselves. Shigefumi’s narrative here is somewhat at variance with Chinese sources, which record that Wen Weng as governor of Shu commandery promoted education and identified local talent, and initiated water conservancy projects. No Confucius temple is recorded, though the whole region is said to have become more civilized as a result of Wen Weng’s efforts, and the

people of Shu are said to have erected a temple to him when he died.⁽³⁶⁾ Shigefumi says that he cannot compare to Wen Weng, but nevertheless hopes that he can imitate him from afar, and accomplish something similar in his own tiny and remote domain. Here the text turns to a direct prayer to Confucius:

It is not that I am acting to create [a thing of] beauty or a spectacle. It is just that I fear that the sincerity of my reverence and faith is not sufficient, and that my reckless efforts in this undertaking in this backward locality might lead the foolish people of the domain to insult the revered deity. [My project] not something that a human being can do [by himself]. I can only humbly pray for the assistance of the deity. I humbly hope that the eternal light of the most sagely deity descends upon this place, on me and down to the numberless people, from now to the endless future, using the illustration of manifest virtue to teach the myriad of all living people to become enlightened. I humbly beseech that you extend your clear radiance.⁽³⁷⁾

This is a clear reflection of the intensity of Shigefumi's desire to succeed at his project, which is reflected also in the time and resources he devoted to it.

Taketomi Hidesuke's text, the "Hakusan shoin senza ki", is dated only seven days later. Its overall celebratory and optimistic tone is so conventional as to give much less of a sense than Shigefumi's piece of what the people involved were actually feeling, or seeking to achieve in practical terms, but it does contain a few objective details not found elsewhere.

The central theme of the piece is Hidesuke's admiration for Shigefumi, and for Kawanami Ji'an, the head of the Taku school. In the case of Shigefumi, Hidesuke describes his dedication to the study of the Confucian canons from childhood, and says that his emphasis was always on the core moral values (綱常

36 *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1962) 89:3625–7.

37 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 6.

之道), and that he discarded close textual analysis (詞章之學). This is an important point: Shigefumi's interest in Confucianism was always more practical than scholarly. He seems genuinely to have been drawn to the values of Confucianism, but he also faced the practical problem of how to govern, and it does seem that we can take more or less at face value his own statements about his dedication to his own responsibilities as a ruler.

Hidesuke says that Shigefumi never stunted in his Confucian study as he reached adulthood, and that he installed a Hall of the Sage (Seidō 聖堂) within the private recesses of his home, where he performed the seasonal spring and autumn sacrifices complete with music and song (though he does not actually use the term *Sekisai* for this). Hidesuke does not say when Shigefumi began to do this, though from the sequence of the narrative it does seem that it was long before he received the bronze statue image of Confucius in 1701. He says that Shigefumi had built up a collection of Chinese and Japanese books, from which he excluded works on Buddhism and Daoism. As we will see below, Hayashi Hōkō also praises him for his rejection of 'heterodoxy' (*itan* 異端), which likely refers to Buddhism.

When Shigefumi could spare time from his duties, Hidesuke says, he would also invite students to his home in an attitude of great humility to teach them Confucian texts. But Shigefumi's efforts extended far beyond this, to founding a school at Kakuzan 鶴山 in Taku, where both officials and commoners (*shinsho* 臣庶) could study Confucianism and perfect themselves.

There follows an account of Kawanami Ji'an, who for a time worked as a physician to support himself before being summoned by Shigefumi, who saw in him someone who could cure not just individuals but multitudes.

Hidesuke turns then to the bronze statue of Confucius. Shigefumi had asked a 'great Confucian' in Kyoto to arrange this for him (this was Nakamura Tekisai 中村 惕齋, whom he does not name). The image was cast, and an artisan from the Kanō workshop (Kanōha 狩野派) was commissioned to paint the patterns used to incise the features of clothing and cap. The date inscribed on the image

itself says it was cast in the fifth month of 1700.⁽³⁸⁾ A great many people inclined toward Confucianism in Kyoto came to see it, but Tekisai was aware of Shigefumi's eagerness to get it, and quickly had it sent to Taku. Hidesuke describes the arrival of the statue:

On the day of its arrival, His Lordship (Shigefumi) rushed out, shoes on backwards and leaping in joy, to receive it into his main hall. He paid it great reverence, bowing down low and putting his head to the ground. My father and I came in response to his invitation. We bowed low and looked up – there it was, the aspect of Confucius⁽³⁹⁾ in a glory of virtue. No ordinary craftsmanship could have produced it. As I admired it in reverence, I was so moved that tears started secretly into my eyes.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The image was transferred to the temporary building next to the school on 1701.9.7, as also recorded by Shigefumi, and a Sekisai held by Shigefumi to mark the installation, but Hidesuke gives no detail, saying little more than that the ceremony was conducted with great solemnity, with music and lectures on the Confucian canons.

The final section of the piece is Hidesuke's own version of the history of the Confucius temple in China and Japan. This is much truncated in comparison with Shigefumi's version, and makes no case for the temple itself as a vector for moral transformation. The emphasis is rather on the sacrifices to Confucius, which he traces back to the first Han dynasty emperor in China, Gaozu 高祖; to the emperors of the Tang dynasty, who first gave Confucius imperial robes,

38 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 2.

39 Literally “the sound of the metal [bells] and striking of the jade [chimes]” (*jinsheng yuzhen* 金聲玉振), an allusion to Mencius 5B/10, where Mencius is referring to the perfection of Confucius's sagehood by likening it to the beginning and end of a musical performance.

40 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 7.

established the institution of the temple for blood sacrifices to him, and enfeoffed his many descendants; then to Japan, and the Sekiten as performed in the Daigakuryō from the time of the Taihō 大宝 period (701–704). The narrative then jumps directly to Tsunayoshi, omitting the dark years between, and traces the same sequence of temples in Edo, Saga, and finally Taku:

[Tsunayoshi] has newly constructed the Taiseiden in the Eastern Capital, and respectfully conducted the Sekisai ceremony in the two seasons. He has personally lectured on the canons and commentaries, and the ways of Confucianism (*jufū* 儒風) have greatly prospered. All the feudal lords throughout the nation have responded to the trend – they esteem virtue, and the lord of our land (of Saga, i.e. Tsunashige) has also founded the Hall of Utmost Sageliness (Shiseiden 至聖殿) in his rear garden, from which the depth of his reverence to his parents is evident.⁽⁴¹⁾

‘Shiseiden’ was the name of the Saga Confucius temple, which Tsunashige placed first in his garden at Ninomaru 二之丸, before moving it to its later location at Onimaru 鬼丸.

Of Shigefumi he says, “Lord Fuji[wara] (Tōkō 藤公), with his ambition for achievements, has constructed Halls of the Sage in his home and in the sub-domain. We can say that his veneration for virtue is most keen and deep.”⁽⁴²⁾

In both Saga and Taku we find the same pattern of Confucius temples being established by rulers in their own homes, later followed by more public versions for the benefit of their domains. A considerable interval might elapse before the founding of the public temple, as rulers were not able to do so without permission from the higher authority. Such an interval is certainly apparent in the case of Shigefumi, who seems to have begun preparations for the Confucius temple in the 1680s, but it was not completed until 1708.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

The remainder of Hidesuke's document will not be considered in any detail here; in general it is a panegyric to Confucianism, to Shigefumi and Kawanami Ji'an, and the benefit the school and temple would have for the domain of Taku over the long term. The emphasis on the anticipated permanence of the temple and school, and the optimism expressed for the project of achieving the moral transformation of the people of Taku through Confucian education, should not be dismissed as empty rhetoric, however exaggerated it may seem. Rather, it should be seen as a reflection of the state of mind prevailing at the time among Shigefumi and his associates.

The Influence from Edo

Both Shigefumi and Hidesuke attribute the revival of Confucianism in Japan to Tsunayoshi, to whom they attribute sage-like qualities. The hyperbole of their discourse aside, their narratives do more or less align with reality. The full story of Tsunayoshi's influence on the spread of Confucianism in Japan is far beyond the scope of this study, but there is little doubt that many officials and domain lords, willing or not, engaged in the study of Confucianism, and some of the latter promoted it in their domains. How many actual "converts" there were can easily be called into question, but a few rulers like Shigefumi and his brother Tsunashige seem to have been quite genuine in following Tsunayoshi's project to use Confucian education for practical government by civil, non-military means.

The influence from Edo to Saga was direct, and it is possible to trace instances of this. We have seen that Confucian education in some Nabeshima-controlled domains was already developing before Tsunayoshi's time, but it was not until Tsunayoshi established the Yushima Seidō that more public temples began to appear in Saga and elsewhere. And, thanks to the *sankin kōtai* system, events in Edo could have an immediate effect on Saga, and Taku.

Contemporary records reveal something of the Edo networks through which the Nabeshima rulers and their subordinates interacted with proponents of Confucianism. One person in these networks was Hayashi Hōkō (or Nobuatsu

信篤), the third head of the Hayashi family school, who was close to Tsunashige, had been teacher to Shigefumi's childhood teacher Sanematsu Genrin, and who after Shigefumi's death in 1711 wrote a memorial in praise of the Taku temple.

Hōkō's autobiographical chronicle records early contacts between himself and Nabeshima family members. One of these was Nabeshima Naoeda 鍋島直条 (1655–1705, r. 1672–1705), lord of Kashima 鹿島 domain, whom he met in 1675, before he became Hayashi family head. He describes Naoeda as being cultured, elegant, and fond of literature. The two of them felt a close affinity at their first meeting, and became close friends. Naoeda would visit frequently at any hour of the day. They established a teacher-student relationship, Hōkō being the elder by eleven years, but Hōkō says their relationship was like that of blood relatives.⁽⁴³⁾ Hōkō's collected works (*zenshū* 全集) also contain poems he sent to Naoeda, though none are particularly revealing.

More important is Hōkō's friendship with Tsunashige, which likewise began early. Hōkō's father Gahō had been on good terms with Mitsushige, Tsunashige's father. There is a record of Tsunashige meeting Hōkō in the tenth month of 1675, when the latter was invited to the Saga residence in Edo. Also present was Nabeshima Naoyoshi, lord of Ogi. Tsunashige asked Hōkō to give him a name for a pavilion he had built, and Hōkō gave the name Kōko 好古 and wrote a piece explaining it. Tsunashige composed a poem with preface in gratitude, and Hōkō responded with a harmonizing poem of his own.⁽⁴⁴⁾

During the 1690s, Tsunayoshi's vigorous promotion of Confucianism inspired a number of daimyō to seek out Hōkō for teaching. He records a list of such people in his autobiographical chronology under the year 1697: Maeda

43 *Jisen* 自撰, *jō* 上, Enpō 延宝 year 3 (1675).

44 Tsunashige's preface and poem are preserved in *Tsunashige kō go nenpu* 綱茂公御年譜 (preface dated 1814), in *Saga-ken kinsei shiryō* 佐賀県近世史料 (Saga: Saga Kenritsu Toshokan, 1995) series 1, vol. 3, p. 559. Hōkō's essay "Kōko-tei ki" 好古亭記 is in *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* 鳳岡林先生全集, ed. Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2013) vol. 3, pp. 322–3.

Yoshinori 前田 吉徳, (1690–1745, r. 1723–1745), then the heir apparent to the lord of Kaga domain and named Yoshiharu 吉治; Date Tsunamura 伊達 綱村 of Sendai (1659–1719, r. 1660–1703), who sent generous gifts and invited Hōkō to come and give lectures; and Shimazu Tsunataka 島津 綱貴 of Satsuma (1650–1704; r. 1687–1704), who likewise invited Hōkō. Then Hōkō records:

There were also those who came personally to me to establish friendship. The Marquis of Hizen, the Chamberlain (Shūi 拾遺) Matsudaira Tsunashige had a marriage affinity with me.⁽⁴⁵⁾ He declared himself my pupil, and we exchanged poems and letters from afar. We interacted heart to heart in great intimacy, entertained one another lavishly, and the letters between us were never interrupted.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Hōkō's collected works do contain several dozen poems addressed to Tsunashige, though only a few are worth mentioning here. They are unfortunately not dated, though those composed before 1695, when Tsunashige became domain lord, address him as 'heir apparent' (*seishi* 世子). One poem, likely from 1691 or not long after, is significant in that an appended note reveals that Tsunashige was in attendance at one of Tsunayoshi's early lectures on the Confucian canons. The preface states:

The Hizen Heir Apparent, the Central Grandee Lord Fujiwara Hakuko 伯固

45 The Nabeshima family had been granted the Matsudaira surname two generations previously; see Murakawa Kōhei 村川 浩平, *Nihon kinsei buke Seiken ron* 日本近世武家政權論 (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 2000), pp. 87–91, 207–8. The marriage was of Hōkō's daughter to Nabeshima Naotada 直正, named by Hōkō as Takumi 内匠, one of Tsunashige's many younger brothers, a match arranged by Tsunayoshi in 1693, and concluded in 1694; *Jisen* 自撰, *jō* 上, Genroku 元禄 year 6 (1693). See also Hōkō's poem of gratitude with preface in *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* vol. 3, pp. 166–7.

46 *Jisen* 自撰, *jō* 上, Genroku 元禄 year 10 (1697).

has received an official command to return to his state. The departure of his carriage is immanent, so I respectfully compose a regulated verse in lieu of a libation, in order to pray for his smooth travel on land and water.

The final couplet reads, “Amid the culture of Great Tranquility the ways of Confucianism arise / I ask that you cause your gracious teachings to extend to the masses of your people.” The commentarial note at the end says, “In the spring of this year the feudal lords (daimyō) were in attendance at the occasion of the Great Lord’s (Tsunayoshi’s) lectures on the canons. The Heir Apparent (Tsunashige) was also present, which is why I said [the final couplet].”⁽⁴⁷⁾

In his autobiographical chronicle *Hōkō* first mentions lectures by Tsunayoshi in the eighth month of 1690;⁽⁴⁸⁾ the note to his poem mentions such lectures in the spring, which might have been 1691 at the earliest. If so, Tsunashige’s return to Saga would have coincided closely with the foundation of his Confucius temple.

One further poem is precisely datable: it was composed in reply to Tsunashige’s poem of congratulations on the marriage of *Hōkō*’s son Shichisaburō 七三郎 on the twelfth day of the sixth month, year not specified, but *Hōkō*’s chronicle records the same date under the year 1703.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Two further poems associated with Saga are worth mentioning, both addressed to Sanematsu Genrin, the Confucian teacher who had taught Shigefumi in childhood. The first, of unknown date, was composed in farewell to Genrin, who was returning home after studying in Edo as *Hōkō*’s pupil.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The second can be precisely dated to 1718, as it was composed on the occasion of Genrin’s

47 *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* vol. 2, p. 9.

48 *Jisen* 自撰, *jō* 上, Genroku 元禄 year 3 (1690).

49 *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* vol. 1, p. 270; *Jisen* 自撰, *ge* 下, Genroku 元禄 year 16 (1703).

50 *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* vol. 1, p. 269. It is not known when this was, but it would certainly been after Genrin’s early study with Taketomi Tomosuke in the 1660s.

eightieth birthday.⁽⁵¹⁾

There is no evidence of direct contact between Hōkō and Shigefumi. Shigefumi seems never to have gone to Edo, and there is no correspondence between the two in surviving sources. Hōkō is likely to have known of Shigefumi and his temple through Tsunashige, and he later composed a “Memorial Record of the Confucius Temple in Taku Sub-domain” (“Hizenkoku Takuyu Bunbyōki” 肥前国多久邑文廟記), dated 1715, four years after Shigefumi’s death in 1711.⁽⁵²⁾

Shigefumi died without male heirs, but had two daughters, whose husbands were adopted as sons. He was succeeded first by Nabeshima Shigemura 茂村 (1699–1744), son of Mototake 元武 (1662–1713, r. 1679–1713), third lord of Ogi, but when Motonobu 元延, the fourth lord of Ogi died, Shigemura went back to Ogi to replace him as fifth lord, changing his name to Naohide 直英. Shigefumi’s second son-in-law Nabeshima Shigeaki 茂明, a Ryūzōji descendant from Suko 須古 sub-domain replaced him. According to Hōkō, it was Shigeaki who asked him to compose the piece on the Taku temple during a visit to Edo in 1714. Given that one of Shigefumi’s (and Tsunashige’s) brothers was Hōkō’s son-in-law, it is not surprising that he says, “I was unable to refuse.”

Hōkō had no direct involvement in the Taku temple, and very little of his very conventional composition needs to be considered here. Much of it is an idealized account of the history of schools in China and Japan, and of the sacrifices to Confucius, and to that extent it roughly parallels the essays by Shigefumi and Hidesuke. Unlike the other two, he does not mention Tsunayoshi directly, but rather attributes the the establishment of the Taiseiden and the spread of civil government to the descendants of Ieyasu collectively; this was perhaps due to the political situation after Tsunayoshi’s death, when his reputation was eclipsed and Hōkō himself marginalized. One point of interest in Hōkō’s document is his description of the physical attributes of the Confucius

51 *Hōkō Hayashi sensei zenshū* vol. 1, p. 274.

52 This document exists as a manuscript in the Taku archive, and is included in *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, pp. 8–10.

statue and the temple building, which immediately follows praise for Shigefumi's personal kindness and commitment to Confucianism:

He chose a site within his domain to construct a new divine temple, in which he installed a statue of the Sage two feet and five inches high; the twelve items of dress seemed as if they were actually [worn] on it. Focusing one's attention on it, one cannot fathom it; the decorative patterns on it are complete, and its coloured decoration is strikingly beautiful.⁽⁵³⁾ The temple is constructed with hall on the south and inner chamber to the north, the spirit shrine set in the middle, with doors and two pillars. Figures of dragons, phoenixes, carp, flowers, bamboo and the like are carved in clear relief and painted with vermilion lacquer. The statues of Yan [Hui], Zeng[zi], [Zi]si, and Mencius are set up as correlates on either side. From east to west it is six *ken* 間 long (10.9 m), north to south four *ken* (7.27 m). It is situated close against rocky mountain slopes, set firmly on its foundations. It perfectly resembles the Chinese design (Tōsei 唐制).⁽⁵⁴⁾

Hōkō includes also a briefer description of the school, and the excellent natural surroundings in which the complex was situated.

Given that Hōkō had never been to Taku, he must have received a detailed description of the temple, quite possibly with pictures and actual building plans perhaps shown him by Shigeaki.

Hōkō relates the unfortunate early death of Shigefumi, and the succession in turn of his two sons-in-law Shigemura and Shigeaki. He praises the latter in particular for carrying on Shigefumi's legacy, repairing the temple, maintaining the sacrifices, and attracting greater numbers of students to the school.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Overall, Hōkō's detailed description of the visual and material properties of

53 This suggests that the statue was colourfully decorated, which is no longer the case.

54 *Jūyō bunkazai Taku seibyō*, p. 9.

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

the temple are particularly striking. This is likely to have derived from the perceptions of its owners – Shigefumi himself, his associates, and his successors – who were much preoccupied by the transforming influence of the temple and statue, which was intended to evoke a religious response among those who saw it.

Conclusion: The Taku Temple and its Chinese Equivalents

From the above, we get some idea of what was in Shigefumi's mind when he created his Confucius temple, which for him personally, and for the Taku sub-domain overall, was an enormous project. He and his associates described the temple using discourse similar to that found in Chinese texts, and there can be no doubt that he knew he was replicating a building, a sacrificial ritual, and also a school as they existed in China. He took pains to shape the temple according to a Chinese design as he understood it. But to what extent did Shigefumi actually regard it as being “Chinese”, if he did so at all?

We have seen that Shigefumi ascribed to the temple a significance, and a function, that it did not explicitly have in China. To explain this, we need to consider first the very different environments of the temple, and of Confucianism overall, in Japan and China. In China of approximately the same period (late Ming to early Qing), the Confucius temple was a familiar feature of the landscape, often associated with schools, in a society where Confucian education and its role as a route to success and power through the examination system was generally known to all. The same was of course not true of Japan. During the seventeenth century Confucianism was being promoted by some in the Bakufu and the domains, but probably not to the extent that its teachings and material manifestations (such as temples, rituals, and clothing) would have entered the general awareness. The Chinese émigré Zhu Shunshui had been delighted to hear in 1664 that Confucianism was flourishing in Edo, but after actually arriving in Edo in the following year, he complained in a letter that in a city of a million people there were only seventy or eight Confucians, and most of these were also

Buddhists at the same time.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In such an environment, any Confucius temple would have been unusual. People generally would not have understood it as an artefact associated with Confucian education and Confucian gentry culture as they would have done in China. The Taku temple in particular, in its remote locality, with its Chinese-like design, would have seemed utterly exotic. Nonetheless, people would still have “read” it as a temple dedicated to a specific deity or deities. It is exactly this effect that Shigefumi tells us he intended. He took the religious significance and function of the Confucius temple much further than would ever have happened in China. We could argue that to a considerable extent he wanted the Confucius temple to be read by his people as something akin to a Buddhist temple. Buddhist temples were loci of numinous power inspiring awe and devotion, and they were a familiar part of the landscape. Shigefumi intended for people to respond to his temple in a similar way. We could almost say that he was relying more on Buddhism, and people’s perception of it, than he was on Confucianism.

We need also to consider the political context of Shigefumi’s temple. He built it at a time when Tsunayoshi actively promoting Confucian learning as a part of his campaign to balance the martial ruling order of the Bakufu with an element of civil governance. Though he, and certainly Shigefumi, may have been genuinely drawn to the teachings of Confucianism in themselves, their aim was in the end to achieve effective practical governance. Shigefumi was intending his temple to achieve what he had not been able to do during fifteen years of rule: to effect a complete, and permanent, moral transformation of the people of Taku, such that they would regulate themselves without any need of enforcement. We should not doubt the intensity and sincerity of his desire to succeed at this, as he explained in his “Bunbyōki”; the language may seem hyperbolic and his aims impractically idealistic, but he did in fact devote extraordinary effort and

56 See Robert Chard, “Zhu Shunshui on the Nature of Confucian Learning in China and Japan,” *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 (*Memoirs of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia*) 168 (December 2015), p. 293.

resources to the project.

The contrast between the Taku temple and its Chinese counterparts in terms of perceived significance and actual function is quite clear. This may seem rather a sweeping statement to make, and one must allow for the sheer variety of local religious practice in China, within which almost anything could happen. But it was certainly not the norm, and we must bear in mind that the Taku temple was operating in a Japanese environment, perceived by people in a conceptual world very different from China.

Given this difference, we must consider the extent to which Shigefumi and his associates regarded themselves as introducing a cultural form that was Chinese. Of course they knew that the Confucius temple originated in China, and designed the temple according what they regarded as a Chinese design. Can we therefore say that Shigefumi was seeking to import Chinese culture and institutions, that he was imitating China?

My own view is that such an explanation would be misleading. Shigefumi was of course perfectly aware that China and Japan were two different countries, that Confucius was born in China, and that Confucianism was prevalent there. However, his writings also reflect a world view in which what we call “Confucianism” in English, which Shigefumi referred to by a variety of terms such as the ‘Way’ (*dō* 道) or ‘Way of the Sage(s)’ (*seidō* 聖道), was a universal truth and a universal culture, not anchored in any specific locale, but perfectible anywhere. Different countries were measured not directly against each other, but rather according to their level of development on a universal scale. In the time of the Daigakuryō Sekiten sacrifices, Japan was, according to Shigefumi, fully the equal of China according to this measure. It was only later, at the hands of “rebellious vassals and violent sons”, that Japan lost its command of Confucian culture, and Confucius temples disappeared from the landscape. Only under Tsunayoshi was this universal culture restored.

Shigefumi was reproducing this iconic material manifestation of Confucian culture in his sub-domain as something which he perceived to be universal in China, but was doing so in a way all his own. It may seem contradictory to claim

that he did not really think of it as Chinese, when he was appealing to Chinese models and attempting to replicate a Chinese design, but at a fundamental level he did not. He was not emulating the Chinese because it was Chinese and therefore superior, but rather emulating the Chinese because it displayed a more advanced command of something that was universal, and beyond Chinese. His creation was his own; it belonged to him, and to Taku. We may cite the perceptions of the people of Taku today: they are perfectly aware of the historical origin of Confucius and Confucianism in China, and are proud of Taku's Confucian achievement; even the sparrows in Taku are said to chirp the *Analects*. And yet they do not perceive the temple or the elaborate Sekisai ceremony held around it as being Chinese, but rather something of their own.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The founding of the Taku temple, and its successful legacy, do not represent any sort of acculturation to Chinese Confucianism and Chinese culture, but are rather a clear example of transculturation, the proactive and selective adoption of cultural forms according to the needs and agendas of the receiving culture. This is why it is so difficult to explain the Taku temple in purely Chinese terms.

57 Personal communication from the staff at the Tōgen Shōsha school site.

