

Patterns of Confucian Cultural Transmission as Reflected in the Self-Perception of Zhu Shunshui in Japan

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Introduction

The Chinese émigré Zhu Shunshui 朱舜水 (1600–1682, personal name Zhiyu 之瑜, courtesy name Luyu 魯璵), spent many years in Japan, intermittently between 1645 and 1659, and permanently from 1660 until his death. His activities there represent an encounter between the respective ‘Confucianisms’ of China and Japan, and shed light on the significant differences between them. Zhu’s writings offer an opportunity for detailed comparative study of concrete cases, which helps us understand what happens to Confucianism when it is transmitted across cultural boundaries, or, to describe it more accurately in the case of Japan, when it is reproduced in a very different cultural environment.

In this study, I examine one particular facet of Zhu Shunshui’s encounters with Japanese Confucianism, and with Japanese society and political authority more generally: his perception, and definition, of his own social and political status, as contrasted with how he was perceived on the Japanese side. His own conviction, based on his Chinese assumptions, was that he had the qualifications to be a high official in government, or even had already achieved the status of one. This would lead him to envisage his appointment by Tokugawa Mitsukuni in 1665 as being the equivalent of a government ministership in China. The Japanese perception of him was quite different: he was appointed as a teacher, and venerated by Mitsukuni as a man of great wisdom and knowledge, but – crucially – he wielded no direct political power as an official, as he himself must

soon have recognized. Documenting Zhu's self-perception as reflected in his writings exposes key differences between Chinese and Japanese Confucianism, particularly in their political dimension, which in turn explains something of how Confucianism was transmitted in Japan.

Zhu Shunshui's assumption of his high status

First we consider what was in Zhu's mind, his own conception of his status. From his cultural background, as a member of the Confucian-educated gentry class (which he termed the *shidafu* 士大夫), he derived a strong sense of high social and political status, which he had earned through his Confucian learning and moral cultivation. This perception of himself was linked to a meritocratic order determined by learning and moral virtue, backed up in China by long tradition and the canonical texts of ancient Confucianism (especially the *Mencius*), and, institutionally, by the examination system. Men who defined themselves as gentry (*shi* 士) in Zhu's time believed that they were qualified to hold office, and regardless of whether they actually were officials, that they had the right, and the duty, to participate in political affairs.⁽¹⁾

Evidence that Zhu held such views, and defended them vigorously, is not difficult to find in his writings. Chronologically, the earliest expression of this comes in his 'Petition Submitted to the Garrison Commissioner of Nagasaki' (*shang Changqi zhenxun jie* 上長崎鎮巡揭), dated 1651. This document is an appeal to be allowed to remain in Japan, or at the very least for the Japanese authorities to acknowledge Zhu's presence in Nagasaki and determine where he should be sent, whether back to China or to Vietnam. This document has often

1 See the account of the changing nature of the *shi* class and the development of their sense of political involvement during the Song and Ming dynasties respectively in Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 307 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), pp. 30–42 and 220–26.

been cited in analyses of Zhu's true intentions in going into exile.⁽²⁾ For purposes of the current study, the most important point is that the main thrust of Zhu's case to remain is based on his own high status and worth, which he believes the Japanese side has failed to recognize. He starts off by saying:

During the days of the tenth month of the *xinmao* 辛卯 year (1651), Zhu Zhiyu makes respectful petition: my humble land came to its final age; treachery, greed and immorality aroused resentment and rebellion among

2 For the contextual background of this document in Zhu's life, including a translation of excerpts from it, see Julia Ching, "The Practical Learning of Chu Shun-shui (1600–1682)," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 193–4. A much more detailed discussion of the petition and its significance may be found in Han Dongyu 韩东育, "Zhu Shunshui zai Ri huodong zaikao" 朱舜水在日活动再考, *Gudai wenming* 古代文明 3.3 (July 2009), pp. 94–8. For Han, Zhu's forceful appeal to be allowed to remain in Japan contradicts what he claims elsewhere, that others persuaded him to remain, which in turn casts doubt on Zhu's honesty. Han's critical approach is refreshing, but his lack of clarity on points of historical detail is somewhat worrying: he presents the full text of the petition in the context of the effort by Andō Seian and others to secure permission for Zhu to remain permanently in Japan in 1660–61, saying that it seems to have been Zhu's own contribution to this effort, not mentioning that the document bears the date *xinmao* year (1651), and also contains the statement that Zhu had been coming to Japan for seven years, which corresponds exactly to his first visit to Japan in 1645. Han also identifies Nabeshima Naoyoshi 鍋島直能, who played a key role in securing Zhu's permission to stay, as the daimyō of Satsuma (he was in fact lord of the much nearer, and smaller, domain of Ogi 小城), which casts further doubt on Han's familiarity with the events of this time and place. However, his wider argument that Zhu says different things to different people in different letters is a convincing one, and is competently presented. Han also offers persuasive reasons for doubting the textual reliability of Zhu's collected works.

the common people, and the empire was lost to treacherous barbarians. Had I been shameless, I could easily have chosen an official post, like picking up mustard seeds. That I did not was because my grandfather, father, and elder brother had in successive generations achieved top results in the examinations and held high office,⁽³⁾ so how could I bear to tie up my hair in a queue and shave my head, as if taking on the semblance of a fox or pig, to become a vassal of the enemy barbarians? I did not choose to die, because even though I had been repeatedly recommended for advanced study in the capital,⁽⁴⁾ and three times received summons for appointment to office, I saw that the Way of the [Confucian] gentleman had vanished completely away, so I firmly refused all of these, and would not accept the sovereign's emolument.⁽⁵⁾

Here we already see the major elements of Zhu's achievements as they were later often recounted, by himself and by others. His family background and

3 Literally 'awarded by imperial decree' (*gao zeng* 誥贈), referring to the award of titles to the deceased relatives of officials of the fifth grade and above.

4 Zhu here uses the anachronistic terms *mingjing* 明經 and *xiaolian* 孝廉, used in Ming and Qing times to refer, respectively, to examination graduates (*xiucai* 秀才) recommended for study in the imperial academy (*guozijian* 國子監) and to provincial graduates (*juren* 舉人). Elsewhere it is clear that he had not undertaken the examinations, but had been offered Presented Scholar status by decree (*yugongsheng* 諭貢生 or *engongsheng* 恩貢生), as will be explained further below.

5 *Zhu Shunshui ji* 朱舜水集, Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 ed. and comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), p. 37. According to the biography (*gyōjitsu* 行美) of Zhu composed by his Mito students Imai Kōsai 今井弘濟 (1652–1689) and Asaka Tanpaku 安積澹泊 (1656–1738), Zhu refused twelve offers of appointment; *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 614–15. Xu Xingqing 徐興慶 identifies thirteen refusals; see the table in Xu, "Kua guojie de wenhua chuanshi: shilun Zhu Shunshui dui keju zhi de pingjia 跨國界的文化傳釋—試論朱舜水對科舉制的評價," *Taida Dong Ya wenhua yanjiu* 臺大東亞文化研究 1 (2013), pp. 22–3.

personal worth by rights should have won him high official status, and indeed he had refused actual offers of appointment. Only the circumstances of the times had prevented him from reaching the position he deserved in China. He is at pains to make this clear to the Nagasaki commissioner from the outset.

He goes on to describe the difficulty he has had in trying to arrange a meeting with the commissioner, who he says is a high circuit official sent from the centre, of such exalted rank that Zhu has never been able to secure audience with him. But the scope of his wishes is clear:

If it is impossible for me to secure an audience [with you], what hope is there of an audience with the high governing officials (*zhizheng dachen* 執政大臣) of your honoured country? What hope is there that the king of your honoured country will extend courtesy to a man from far away (*shang an wang guiguo zhi wang jia li yuanren zai* 尚安望貴國之王加禮遠人哉)?⁶

Though couched in negative terms, it is plain that Zhu believed his status should have earned him the attention of the highest authorities in Japan, including the 'king' (by which he presumably meant the Tokugawa shogun).

He then likens his predicament to those of various famous exiles of ancient China:

In ancient times, when lords were destroyed and their states perished, and when it was permissible by the rules of righteousness for their high officials, their lordly sons, and the sons of their high officials not to lay down their lives, they would invariably flee into exile in other states. In the states they went to there were five different ways they could be treated. In the highest cases, they were received at the [capital city] outskirts [by the ruler of the state] (*this was the case with Lord Mu of Qin 秦穆公 and King Zhuang of Chu*

6 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 38.

楚莊王 *in relation to the [Jin prince] Chong'er 重耳*;⁽⁷⁾ or else they might be treated as honoured guests and teachers (*this was the case with [King] Tang 湯 [of the Shang dynasty] in relation to Yi Yin 伊尹, and King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王 in relation to Fan Sui 范雎; other examples at different times and places are too numerous to detail*).⁽⁸⁾ In the next highest case, [the exiles] were paid a stipend and given posts as ministers. If it was feared that the other state might be attacked, [the exile] would accordingly be sent home (*this was the case with Shi bo 施伯 in relation to Guan Zhong 管仲*).⁽⁹⁾ If [the exile] had committed a crime, he might be driven out (*this was the case with Ji Wenzi 季文子 in relation to Pu of Ju 莒僕*).⁽¹⁰⁾ These are all recorded in the canonical chronicles, and can be verified. There was never a case when they let [the exile] come and go by himself, never paying him the slightest heed. If your honoured country is concerned that loyalty and righteousness not be extinguished (*zhongyi bu ke mie 忠義不可滅*), and generously allow [a person of these qualities] to remain, then it would be only me (*yi zhi Yu er yi 亦止瑜而已*). There is not one single other person who can compare (*ci wai geng wu yiren keyi bili 此外更無一人可以比例*).⁽¹¹⁾

7 Here and below the italics indicates text given in small characters in the original, additional explanatory notes added by Zhu himself. The first example refers to one of the most famous exiles in history: Chong'er, the future Lord Wen of Jin (Jin Wen gong 晉文公, r. 636–628 BC), and second hegemon (*ba 霸*).

8 Yi Yin, though he had not fled into exile, had left his original state of Youxin 有莘 when he worked in Tang's kitchens. Fan Sui (or Fan Ju 雎), was an exile from the state of Wei 魏 who was made chief minister of Qin by King Zhao from 266–255 BC.

9 Shi Bo, a grandee in Lu, recognized Guan Zhong's superior talent while the latter was in exile in Lu, and advised against returning him to Qi.

10 Pu assassinated his father, Lord Ji of Ju 莒紀公, in 610 BC, and fled to Lu. Lord Xuan of Lu 魯宣公 planned to give him a fief, but Ji Wenzi, chief minister in the state of Jin, ordered Xuan to expel him.

11 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 38.

Through his examples of such prominent exiles, he is clearly signalling that in China he is a man of high status, no ordinary commoner, and deserving of special treatment, whether favourable or not. It is also quite possible that his singling himself out in the way he did at the end of the above passage, striking for its lack of humility, was calculated to appeal to the Japanese sense of loyalty.

Further on he says that the Japanese authorities are rigorous in searching and inspecting incoming cargo for valuable goods of all sorts from China, immediately sending unusual items to Edo by rapid courier, and yet:

When it comes to a capable man and a [Confucian] gentleman (*xianren junzi* 賢人君子), one who is a precious treasure to a nation (*wei guo zhong bao* 爲國重寶), you neither search nor inspect, but throw him away like a worn-out shoe, place him in a situation where he has no choice but to die – what could possibly be the reason for this?⁽¹²⁾

Zhu's strength of feeling and indignation come across clearly in these passages, which reflect the depth and conviction of his sense of high status. On the Japanese side, however, there is no evidence that this petition ever elicited any response.

The concept of a 'treasure to a nation' is explained further in a document which, according to his own account, Zhu gave to a king and his officials in Vietnam in 1657, when he was suddenly summoned to assist in drafting documents in Chinese during a three-year stay in Hội An 會安 on the central coast.⁽¹³⁾ The ensuing confrontation between Zhu and the Vietnamese 'king', in

12 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 39.

13 Zhu's day-by-day account of his confrontation with the Vietnamese 'king' and various related documents, under the title 'Annan gong yi ji shi' 安南供役紀事, are preserved in his collected works, *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 14–34. Julia Ching identifies this 'king' as Nguyễn Phúc Tần (1620–1687), given that he was the one who controlled the area where Zhu lived at that time; see Ching, "The Practical Learning of Chu Shun-shui," p.

which Zhu refused to prostrate himself even under threat of death, was a situation in which Zhu vigorously defended his high status. His written account of the events, and the documents he produced to justify his stand to the Vietnamese, played a key part in his efforts to promote himself in Japan from 1658 onwards.

In a document which he says he publicly displayed for all the Vietnamese officials to read, he explains that there are two types of Confucian: one devoted to scholarly learning with wide knowledge of past words and deeds, and the other devoted primarily to moral cultivation. It was rare for one person to be equally accomplished in both areas. Then he says:

When there is one who is able to combine both, then humanity, righteousness, ritual propriety, and intelligence accumulate inside him, and respect, reverence, mildness, and refinement are expressed on his exterior. Such a one is truly the most precious treasure for a nation (*guojia zhi zhibao* 國家之至寶), and the highest jewel for sagely emperors and enlightened kings (*sheng di ming wang zhi shang zhen* 聖帝明王之上珍). The sovereign who employs him will enjoy security, wealth, veneration, and glory; if his sons and younger brothers obey him they will be filial, fraternally devoted, loyal, and trustworthy. Thus, a salary of ten thousand *zhong* (*wan zhong* 萬鍾) is not too high, an escort of ten chariots not too lavish; dragon robes and ritual dress to adorn such a one are not too ornamental; titles such as 'supreme father' and 'uncle-father' to venerate him are not excessive.⁽¹⁴⁾ Why is this? When the Way is exalted and virtue is in the ascendant, he bears

195. As Ching points out, Zhu's writings reflect little understanding of the contemporary political situation in Vietnam.

14 'Supreme father' (*shang fu* 尚父) was the title given to Lü Wang 呂望 (Jiang Tai Gong 姜太公), who served King Wu of the Zhou, and 'uncle-father' (*zhong fu* 仲父) was Guan Zhong 管仲, minister to the first hegemon Lord Huan of Qi (Qi Huan gong 齊桓公) in the seventh century BC.

[such honours] with no expression of shame.⁽¹⁵⁾

This is how a man of Confucian accomplishment should be treated, if the age is one that is worthy of him. Here and there Zhu inserts modest demurrals that he is one of meagre qualities, but the context of the argument – his explanation of why he should not bow to the Vietnamese king – makes it abundantly clear that he is describing himself, with the added implication that the king's failure to recognize Zhu's worth means that his state is not one of the appropriate qualities.

As he had previously done in his petition to the Nagasaki commissioner, Zhu tells the Vietnamese that he had declined several official appointments. However, there was by that time one that he had not declined, which he received at the beginning of 1657 from the Prince of Lu (Lu wang 魯王), Zhu Yihai 朱以海 (1618–1662), titled 'Edict From the Imperial Regent, the Prince of Lu' ('Jianguo Lu wang chi' 監國魯王敕), dated the third month of the ninth year of the prince's rule (probably 1654). This edict ordered Zhu to return at once, and gave an optimistic account of the regime's success in regaining control over a wide area of South China.⁽¹⁶⁾ Zhu did not receive the edict until nearly three years after it was issued, but he did not decline it, and, according to his reply to the Prince of Lu, cancelled a planned trip to Siam and made preparations to return immediately to China in response to the summons. He also states that he treated the document with due deference, not opening it at once, but selecting an auspicious day, burning incense, and prostrating himself before reading it.⁽¹⁷⁾ He was

15 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 26. This passage is also reproduced in the *Shinsō shūgo* 心喪集語 compiled by Andō Seian 安東省庵, as he received it from Zhu in 1659. See the discussion and citation of this further below.

16 The text of the edict is reproduced in *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 34. There are conflicting accounts of whether the Prince of Lu's calendar began in 1646 or 1647; see the discussion in Ishihara Michihiro 石原道博, *Shu Shunsui* 朱舜水 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961, reprinted 1989), pp. 42–44.

17 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 31–2.

delayed by his confrontation with the king in Vietnam, and by the time he finally departed in 1658, the Qing advance meant that the Prince of Lu's cause was all but lost, and the official post no longer possible, but Zhu nonetheless treasured the edict itself, and kept it for the rest of his life. More will be said about its significance to Zhu and his use of it to promote himself in the next section below.

According to Zhu, these various offers of appointment meant that he held the status of 'summoned scholar' (*zheng shi* 徵士), or the more honorific variant 'summoned lord' (*zheng jun* 徵君).⁽¹⁸⁾ We see something of his understanding of what this meant to him in his account of his conflicts with the Vietnamese 'king', who was attempting to retain Zhu's services for assistance in drafting documents in Chinese. When Zhu was called before an assembly of officials to discuss the situation, they told him:

'The king summons all Confucian scholars (*zheng zhu ru* 徵諸儒); what advice can you give?'

I made a sound of assent, and said, 'Only the Son of Heaven is permitted to use the word "summon" (*zheng*). [Your] Great King may control all the territory of Tonkin (Đông Kinh 東京), but once China recovers its rightful position and title, he will be no more than a feudatory king in the Desolate Subjugation Zone (*huang fu* 荒服, the second 'barbarian' tributary zone outside China). What audacity for him to say "summon"!'

The officials all nodded and said, 'Yes! Yes! Yes!'⁽¹⁹⁾

When he met the Vietnamese king, Zhu refused to prostrate himself, even

18 As Zhu explained to Andō Seian, it was not appropriate for him to refer to himself as 'summoned lord', but others could do so; see Seian's compilation *Shinsō shūgo* 心喪集語, ms reproduced in *Andō Seian shū: ei'in hen* 安東省菴集——影印編, Part II, in *Yanagawa bunka shiryō shūsei* 柳川文化資料集成 2.2 (Yanagawa: Yanagawa-shi, 2004), p. 339a.

19 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 16.

under threat of death, resulting in a standoff of many days. The precise details of these events are not pertinent to the current study, but what is important is Zhu's justification for not prostrating himself, which came down to his definition of his own status as one who had been 'summoned' (*zheng*). As he told them, 'I am a Summoned Scholar of the Great Ming' (*wo Da Ming zheng shi ye* 我大明徵士也).⁽²⁰⁾ For a 'summoned scholar' to prostrate himself before the king would be a violation of ritual propriety (*li* 禮), and Zhu would sooner submit to a cruel death. The king and his followers assumed Zhu was acting out of arrogance, exploiting his connection with the large country of China to bully a small nation, but, according to Zhu, this was not so: 'The king does not perceive that my not prostrating myself is in conformity with ritual propriety' (*da wang bu cha bu bai zhi shi li* 大王不察不拜之是禮).⁽²¹⁾ In preparation for his imminent execution, Zhu asked his fellow Chinese to gather his bones, if any among them had sufficient courage to do so, and arrange burial with the inscription 'Grave of the Summoned Lord of Ming, Zhu So-and-so' (*Ming Zheng jun Zhu mou zhi mu* 明徵君朱某之墓).⁽²²⁾ This title was clearly of importance to him; many years later, when Isogawa Kōhaku 五十川剛伯 (d. 1699) of Kaga domain, one of Zhu's students, circulated the earliest edition of Zhu's collected writings in 1684 (later known as the Kaga edition), he gave it the title *Ming Zhu zheng jun ji* 明朱徵君集, reflecting his understanding that this title was the one that meant the most to Zhu, and which most clearly reflected his true status.⁽²³⁾ And, when in 1682 Mitsukuni buried Zhu in a position of honour among his family tombs on Zuiryūsan 瑞龍山, it was with the inscription 'Grave of the Summoned Lord of Ming, Master Zhu'

20 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 19.

21 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 20.

22 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 19.

23 This Kaga edition is preserved in Inaba Kunzan's edition of Zhu's collected works, which includes the full table of contents and all content not included in the more extensive Mito edition. See Inaba Kunzan 稻葉君山 comp., *Shu Shunshui zenshū* 朱舜水全集 (Tokyo: Bunkaidō Shoten 文會堂書店, 1912), pp. 597–708.

(*Ming Zheng jun Zi Zhuzi mu* 明徵君子朱子墓).⁽²⁴⁾

The above passages give a good sense of the high status that Zhu defined for himself, on the basis of his Chinese-based understanding of his Confucian accomplishments, as he explained himself to non-Chinese interlocutors. This was what was in his mind, but how did he act on it, especially after he settled in Japan? The evidence suggests that even in the very different cultural and political environment of Japan he never gave up the idea of becoming an official.

Zhu Shunshui's self-promotion in Japan

The biography (*gyōjitsu* 行実) of Zhu Shunshui composed by his Mito students Imai Kōsai 今井弘濟 (1652–1689) and Asaka Tanpaku 安積澹泊 (1656–1738), which is an important source for much that we know of Zhu's life, makes much of his humility about his own achievements, and those of his family. According to them, 'Of such matters as the official titles of his ancestors and relatives, and the fact that he personally had received a summons of appointment, he never spoke, not even to his intimate friends and pupils.' And, they say that he showed no one his edict of appointment from the Prince of Lu. When he died, various items that he had kept locked in a chest were discovered, including copies of official memorials by his ancestors, his own personal history (*lǚlì* 履歷), and the Prince of Lu's edict document in a casket embossed with dragons.⁽²⁵⁾ This secrecy is in stark contrast to the straightforward declaration of his accomplishments to the Nagasaki Commissioner in 1651, and to the Vietnamese king and officials in 1657. It may be that having received a post under Mitsukuni he felt no further need to tell others about his status, though we cannot know how far we can trust this biography of Zhu: it is highly laudatory in tone throughout, and doubts have been raised about the reliability of the documentary record on Zhu more generally, and of his own collected works, on the grounds

24 Ishihara, *Shu Shunsui*, p. 172.

25 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 624.

that they reflect an idealization of Mitsukuni and too-perfect caution and humility on the part of Zhu.⁽²⁶⁾ Whether or not he concealed his accomplishments while serving Mitsukuni, there can be no doubt that after Zhu left Vietnam for Japan in 1658 he actively promoted himself, and that his ultimate aim in doing so was to secure an official post under a lord in Japan who would appreciate and respect his talents.

Zhu's refusal to prostrate himself before the Vietnamese king under threat of execution was one expression, or display, of his status as he defined it. However, the full expression of the status he claimed would have been an actual official post, of the sort he might have expected in China in better times. He absolutely refused to serve the 'barbarian' Qing regime, and clung to his identity right until his death, retaining Ming-style hair and clothing. But this did not preclude taking office in another country, as the exiles of ancient China he mentions had done, and there are signs that he was willing to do so, and even actively sought this, before he actually did take service under Tokugawa Mitsukuni in 1665.

The first point to consider is Zhu's motivations in seeking refuge abroad. This is a complex question, on which various scholars have offered a range of opinions, most not worth repeating here, except to say that he seems to have had more than one. He himself often said that he sought only a safe place of refuge, and it seems to be true that he fled in the dead of night when his refusal of an appointment from the military leader Fang Guo'an 方國安 resulted in an order for his prosecution for treason.⁽²⁷⁾ I would argue that in addition to other motivations, we should consider the possibility that he always had in mind the hope for a chance to be appointed to office in another country where Confucianism was influential. This is apparent in many of his statements in Japan and Vietnam.

26 Han Dongyu, "Zhu Shunshui zai Ri huodong zaikao."

27 *Gyōjitsu*, in *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 613–14, also in Zhu's autobiographical *Lüli*, as preserved in Andō Seian's *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 338b.

In his 1651 petition to the Nagasaki commissioner, he says that he fled to Japan, abandoning his family, because he had heard that ‘Your honourable country esteems the *Songs* and *Documents*, and venerates ritual propriety and righteousness’ (*gui guo dun Shi Shu er shang li yi* 貴國敦詩書而尚禮義).⁽²⁸⁾ In the Vietnam documents, he says that he fled there because had heard from one Qiu Wenzhuang 丘文莊 that ‘Annam and Korea are countries which know ritual propriety’ (*Annan Chaoxian zhi li zhi guo* 安南、朝鮮，知禮之國).⁽²⁹⁾ In other words, Japan and Vietnam were reputed to be countries where Confucian values were honoured, and, as we have seen, he believed that his superior qualities should have been recognized in both. The obvious implication of being a ‘wise and capable Confucian’ and ‘treasure to a nation’ was that he was eligible for high office. He wanted the Vietnamese and Japanese authorities to know this, and criticizes them for failing to understand his value to them. It is no exaggeration to say that he was promoting himself. In Vietnam, according to his own account, his resolute stand eventually won the respect of the king and his officials, and the king offered him an official appointment, using language obviously designed to accord with Zhu’s own Chinese discourse, for example saying that the Zhou-era sovereigns had achieved true kingship because of the minister Tai Gong 太公 (Zhu had previously used the title ‘Supreme Father’, *shang fu* 尚父, an allusion to Tai Gong, in one of his documents to the Vietnamese, as presented above), and the Han dynasty had risen because of the minister Chen Ping 陳平 (d. 178 BC). Zhu’s politely-worded refusal of the king’s offer is also preserved.⁽³⁰⁾

After Zhu left Vietnam in 1658 and went back to Japan, we find further examples of the self-promotion of his status and accomplishments. The most important of these occurred during his early encounters with the Japanese Confucian Andō Seian 安東省庵 (or 省菴, 1622–1701, personal name Morinari 守約). Meeting Seian was a major turning point in Zhu’s life: Seian played a key role

28 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 37.

29 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 26–7.

30 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 22–3.

in the successful campaign to secure Zhu permission to remain permanently in Japan, and until 1665 he supported Zhu in Nagasaki by giving him half his salary. Arguably, without the connection to Seian and the fame that he acquired from it, Zhu might never have come to Mitsukuni's attention and never been appointed by him, and might not have achieved the prominence and influence in Japan that he did.

Zhu and Seian did not meet by chance. Their first encounter came about through the initiative of Zhu and a mutual friend, a prominent Chinese scholar and physician named Chen Mingde 陳明德 (or Chen Rude 入德, Japanese name Egawa Nittoku 穎川入德, 1596–1674), who had settled in Nagasaki in 1627 and become Japanese. Chen played an active role in their meeting, praising Zhu in terms that guaranteed Seian's admiration, but there can be little doubt that Zhu himself planned his approach to Seian in such a way as to present himself in a favourable – and impressive – light.

Zhu and Chen's choice of Seian for special attention is in itself illuminating. Seian was a man of the samurai class who came to Confucianism relatively late, at the age of twenty-eight. He studied with the Kyoto Confucian Matsunaga Sekigo 松永尺五 (1592–1657) from 1649 to 1653, together with the future Bakufu Confucian scholar Kinoshita Jun'an 木下順庵 (1621–1698), and worked so hard at this that Sekigo feared for his health.⁽³¹⁾ From Zhu's point of view, Seian's dedication to Confucianism was of course admirable in itself, but also useful in a practical sense, in that Seian would be interested in Zhu and likely to want to help him. More importantly, Seian was a samurai, and held the post of Confucian scholar in the domain of Yanagawa 柳川. Here was a perfect opportunity for Zhu to establish contact with someone approximately similar to himself, a political

31 Sekigo describes Seian's remarkable accomplishments, and the harm to his health, in a preface to farewell poems he composed on Seian's departure in 1653; this is reproduced in Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武 annot. and comp., *Sekigo-dō Sensei zenshū* 尺五堂先生全集, in *Kinsei juka bunshū shūsei* 近世儒家文集集成 vol. 11 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2000), pp. 31–32.

Confucian rather than just a Confucian by learning, and a potential channel to higher levels of political power in Japan.⁽³²⁾ Both Zhu and Seian describe their meeting in highly positive and idealistic terms, and we should not be overly cynical about Zhu's motives, but there can be no doubt about his deliberate effort to make the best possible impression on Seian, and to ensure that he understood Zhu's high status in the Chinese order.

We know something of Zhu's earliest encounters with Seian through Zhu's letters, but much more pertinent to the current study are writings and materials assembled by Seian himself. Here we will examine Seian's 'Eulogy to Master Zhu' ('Dō Shu Sensei bun' 悼朱先生文), composed in 1682 when he first received news of Zhu's death, and a collection of writings by Zhu which Seian assembled in 1683 under the title *Shinsō shūgo* 心喪集語 not long after.⁽³³⁾

According to Seian's 'Eulogy', he first learned of Zhu through Chen Mingde in the tenth month of 1659 (not 1658, as is stated in most accounts).⁽³⁴⁾ Chen

32 Zhu's keenness to meet Seian may be contrasted with his later refusal to meet Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705), a committed Confucian with no political power. See the discussion of this in Han Dongyu, "Zhu Shunshui zai Ri huodong zaikao," pp. 98–102.

33 The 'Eulogy' is reproduced in the *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 734–739, which is the version cited here. The identical text appears also in in three collections of Seian's works: *Kachi Seian shukan* 霞池省菴手簡 (colophon dated 1720), the *Seian Sensei ishū* 省菴先生遺集 (colophon dated 1721), and the *Shinsō shūgo* 心喪集語 (ms. in Yanagawa Komonjokan Denshūkan Bunko 柳川古文書館伝習館文庫, dated autumn 1683). Photoreproductions of early printings of the first two texts are published in *Andō Seian shū: ei'in hen* 安東省菴——影印編, Part I, in *Yanagawa bunka shiryō shūsei* 柳川文化資料集成 2 (Yanagawa: Yanagawa-shi, 2002), with the 'Dō Shu Sensei bun' on pp. 360–364 and 487–490 respectively; the *Shinsō shūgo* version is in *Andō Seian shū: ei'in hen*, Part II, in *Yanagawa bunka shiryō shūsei 2.2* (Yanagawa: Yanagawa-shi, 2004), pp. 371–376.

34 The greater reliability of Seian's chronology is argued persuasively in 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.

brought him a letter and two essays from Zhu, one of which was an extract from the 'Annan gongyi jishi', the account of his encounter with the Vietnamese king (the passage presented above). Seian quotes Chen's description of Zhu:

This is a great man of China, advanced in age and illustrious in virtue. His surname is Zhu, courtesy name Luyu 魯璵. In the seventeenth year of the Chongzhen era (1644), he received two summons (*zheng* 徵) of appointment, but he did not take them up. He was then given the post of Deputy Commissioner (*fushi* 副使) concurrently with Intendant in the Board of War (*bingbu langzhong* 兵部郎中), and again did not accept it. In declining these appointments, he was not guarding his personal integrity against immoral [government]; rather it was because the national affairs were deteriorating day by day, and the situation was unsustainable. Later, when he was in Annam, the king wished to appoint him, but he bowed and withdrew. The king, enraged, was going to kill him, but Zhu stood fast in accordance with ritual propriety and would not submit. And, he has an edict from the Prince of Lu. For you to receive the acquaintance of such a one will bring you glory greater than [a high official's] coloured robes.⁽³⁵⁾

Introducing Zhu in such a way was obviously intended to impress Seian, and the excerpt from the Vietnam diary, which included statements of Zhu's high status in Chinese terms, his Confucian identity, and his willingness to die rather than violate Confucian ritual propriety, would reinforce this effect. Seian was duly impressed, and sent back a polite letter in reply, in which he addressed Zhu using the polite forms of address appropriate for a student to a teacher. But, they were unable to meet, and Zhu had no time to compose a reply, because he took ship for Xiamen at short notice only two days later, circumstances he explained in a

119–21. For the year 1658 see, for example, Ishihara, *Shu Shunshui*, pp. 289–290.

35 'Eulogy', *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 735, consulting the translation in Shu, "Cultural and Political Encounters," pp. 116–17.

long letter sent to Seian from China, which arrived the following year. Zhu returned to Japan that year (1660), but Seian was not free to leave his official duties in Yanagawa, so they did not actually meet until 1661. By this time, Seian, with the crucial assistance of Nabeshima Naoyoshi 鍋島直能, daimyō of Ogi 小城 domain, and others had secured permission for Zhu to remain permanently in Nagasaki. Seian gave half his official salary for Zhu's support, an act of generosity which would greatly enhance the fame of both men.⁽³⁶⁾

The first part of Seian's *Shinsō shūgo* contains various materials from the early period of their relationship. Seian's duties kept him in Yanagawa much of the time, and between 1661 and 1665 he was usually able to go to Nagasaki only twice a year, so most of their communications were in writing, by letter. The materials relating to the period up to and including their first meeting in 1661 are contained in different sections of the text, may be summarized as follows:⁽³⁷⁾

1. The two documents he received at the time of Chen Mingde's initial introduction in 1659, the Vietnam document extract (336a–b), and a panegyric on Confucius and Confucians which is also preserved in Zhu's collected works under the title 'Yu Andō Shouyue gui 諭安東守約規 (336b).⁽³⁸⁾
2. Written replies to Seian's questions from the period before they met, on such topics as literary composition, methods of study, the nature of commentaries on the Confucian canons (337a–338a).
3. Zhu's autobiographical personal history (*lǐlì* 履歷, 338a–340a).
4. An account of Zhu's examination status and refusals of appointment to office (Ju xiaolian shimo 舉孝廉始末', 340a–341b).

36 Ishihara, *Shu Shunsui*, pp. 101–107.

37 *Shinsō shūgo*, pp. 336a–b, ms. reproduced in *Andō Seian shū: ei'in hen*, Part II. The numbers of the sections are my own, and the numbers in parentheses are to the pages in this edition.

38 This second text is also in *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 578–9.

5. A transcription of the text of the edict from the Prince of Lu (341b–342b).
6. Account of events on the voyage to Japan ('Qian lai zhou zhong shi 前來舟中事', 342b–343b).
7. A record of Seian's 'brush conversations' with Zhu at their first meeting in 1661 ('Chujian biyu 初見筆語', 343b–355b).

In this material in the *Shinsō shūgo* we find Zhu presenting much the same picture of himself as he had previously. In Section 1, the first passage is the same as that presented above, in which Zhu informs the Vietnamese that a Confucian who masters both book learning and moral cultivation is a 'treasure to the nation' deserving of high salary and other markers of status. As an initial introduction, this document, along with the context of the story of Zhu's defiance of the Vietnamese king as Chen Rude told it to Seian, were very obviously designed to gain Seian's immediate attention, and impress upon him Zhu's Confucian attainment and the status that was rightly his.

Section 3, Zhu's personal history, is one of the most important statements of how Zhu presented his status to the Japanese. It is most probably a copy of the document Zhu composed in 1660 for the Nagasaki Commissioner as part of the appeal to gain permission for him to stay in Japan.⁽³⁹⁾ It may also be the one which Zhu later kept locked in a chest with the edict from the Prince of Lu and other documents, discovered after Zhu's death by his Mito students, as described above. This text is not preserved in any modern edition of Zhu's collected writings, though there is a quite different, formal, less personal, and more humbly-worded *lǐlǐ* later composed by Zhu at Mitsukuni's request.⁽⁴⁰⁾ It appears that Asaka Tanpaku and Imai Kōsai drew on something similar to the *Shinsō*

39 He mentions being asked by the Commissioner to provide this in a letter to Seian; see *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 177.

40 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 350–53. This might also have been the one found among Zhu's effects after his death, though if it had been presented to Mitsukuni it should have been more widely known.

shūgo version of the *lǚli* in composing Zhu's biography (*gyōjitsu*), as the wording of some passages in the two are identical.⁽⁴¹⁾

This document sketches the narrative of Zhu's life, casting him as a man of superior talent for whom an official career was impossible because of the turmoils of the age. It presents a rather more detailed listing of Zhu's various proofs of his status than in Zhu's earlier writings: his scholastic achievements, his unwillingness to serve because of the worsening disorder in the empire, his actual status in the examination system, his repeated refusals of official appointment, and his edict of appointment from the Prince of Lu. There is also information about his children and brother, which add a personal touch to the narrative. The list of his refused appointments is not worth repeating here, except to note that naming so many was obviously calculated to drive home the point that he was qualified for high office and much in demand among the struggling remnants of the Ming government. His account of his examination status is also explained in some detail: he says that in the general disorder the officials in the provinces knew nothing of what had happened at court, making it possible for him to conceal that he had been 'summoned' and claim to be of the lower Government Student status (*yin de hui zhi, zhi cheng shengyuan* 因得諱之, 止稱生員). However, this became awkward when the Prince of Lu arrived in Zhoushan (probably in 1653), and Zhu says, 'I was not willing to say plainly that I had been Summoned, yet dared not continue concealing myself as before, for fear of committing the crime of deceiving the sovereign (*qi jun* 欺君). Thus I claimed myself to be a Presented Scholar by Grace (*en gongsheng* 恩貢生).'⁽⁴²⁾ He

41 For example, Zhu's words to his second wife née Chen 陳, about Zhu's decision not to pursue an official career, her filial behaviour toward Zhu's mother, and the excellent rapport between the two; see *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 338a and *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 613. The list of examination honours and appointments that Zhu refused is also largely the same, except that the *gyōjitsu* version inserts dates and additional information; *Shinsō shūgo*, pp. 338a–339a and *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 613–14.

42 I.e. by decree rather than by passing the relevant examination; *Shinsō shūgo*, p.

continued to refuse all appointments, he says, and also a recommendation by one Wang (in a later document named Wang An jun 王按君) to give him the status of provincial graduate (*xiaolian* 孝廉, which he says in a note is the same as the *juren* 舉人 of his own time).⁽⁴³⁾

All this changed when the Prince of Lu issued his explicit edict of summons to Zhu in 1654, as described above. He explains his new status as follows:

If I refer to my own title, I say ‘summoned scholar’ (*zheng shi*). If other people name the title, they would say ‘summoned lord’ (*zheng jun*) or ‘appointed lord’ (*pin jun* 聘君). Generally, appointments by summons in the [Ming] court are rarely seen, and [the appointee] greatly exceeds examination graduates [in status] (*yuan guo kejia* 遠過科甲). Because of the turmoil of the age, I concealed myself and referred to my title as Presented by Grace (*engong* 恩貢), because this was not far removed from Government Student (*shengyuan*) status. In other situations, such as records of my life, it would not be appropriate for me to give my [true status], lest I come under suspicion of self-praise.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The account makes no further mention of Zhu’s status, but moves to a more personal account of his children and brother. No account of his time in Vietnam is included.

This document was composed as Zhu’s part in the effort to persuade the Nagasaki Commissioner to grant permission to settle in Nagasaki, and not specifically directed at Seian, but Seian was impressed by it, and in subsequent letters he asked for more detail about Wang Anjun’s recommending him for the status of provincial graduate, and about the edict from the Prince of Lu. Sections

338b.

43 *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 339a.

44 *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 339a. This passage is written in small characters, an added note to the entry that he had received the edict of summons from the Prince of Lu.

4 and 5 in the above list are Zhu's replies. Section 4 gives a quite detailed account of how he came to be recommended and his memorial refusing the honour; it will not be discussed here, except to note that it reinforces the theme of a worthy man who refuses to enter service in an age of chaos. Section 5 is the text of the Prince of Lu's edict.

As we have seen above, there is a contradiction between Zhu's *gyōjitsu* biography account of this edict, which states that he kept it locked away and never revealed its existence to anyone, and his willingness to tell the Vietnamese about it, and about the personal and political status he derived from it. In Japan, too, he was not at all reticent about revealing its existence to the Nagasaki Commissioner and to Seian, though he was unwilling to part with the document itself, and only sent both men transcriptions of the text, which Seian included in the *Shugo*.⁽⁴⁵⁾ When the two men finally met, Zhu showed him the original edict document; Seian's record of their conversation includes a simple drawing of what it looked like.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Throughout the above, we see a consistent pattern: Zhu vigorously explaining his status in two countries, Vietnam and Japan, where we are justified in assuming that he felt there was sufficient Confucian influence that he might be able to win an official post. Further, in promoting himself to Seian, he was seeking a connection to political power. We have no evidence that Zhu ever expected Seian to find him an official post, but in their correspondence we see not only Zhu's advice on Seian's personal study and development, but also technical assistance on matters potentially of political import, namely ritual Confucian forms such as funerals and clothing, which Seian may have hoped to

45 *Shinsō shūgo*, pp. 341b–342b. The letter to Seian in which he copied the edict text itself is preserved, and transcribed in Xu Xingqing 徐興慶 comp., *Xinding Zhu Shunshui ji buyi* 新訂朱舜水集補遺 (Taipei: Taiwan Daxue Chuban Zhongxin, 2004), pp. 268–9.

46 *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 346b.

introduce in Yanagawa.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Seian once proposed to persuade the newly installed *daimyō* Tachibana Akitora 立花鑑虎 (r. 1664–1696) to allow Zhu to come and reside with him in Yanagawa, but Zhu advised against this, fearing that relations between Seian and his new lord might be jeopardized if permission for this were refused by the Nagasaki commissioner.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In the end, Zhu's link to Seian did not lead directly to any sort of official appointment, and I have found no evidence that their work on ritual forms had any actual result in the institutions of Yanagawa domain. However, the story of Zhu and Seian became known in Edo, as Zhu learned from speaking to a 'gentleman' (presumably a samurai) who had been there, as he revealed in a letter to Seian.⁽⁴⁹⁾ By 1664, Zhu had come to the attention of Mitsukuni, who conceived the idea of bringing Zhu to serve under him in Edo, as related below.

Zhu, for his part, seems to have wished he could have gone to Edo, rather than remaining in Nagasaki. In a preface written for the Chinese interpreter (*Tōtsūji* 唐通事) Hayashi Dō'ei 林道榮 on the occasion of the latter's departure to Edo in 1661, Zhu says that Edo is filled with talented men, and hopes that Dō'ei will seek them out and tell Zhu about them. He includes a long list of allusions to talented men of antiquity in China, and expresses regret that he is confined to Nagasaki and unable to meet such men in Japan, men who surely exist, and who will 'correct their lords and bring glory to their states' (*kuang qi jun er hua qi guo zhe* 匡其君而華其國者). In a word, men exactly like Zhu's perception of himself. If he could interact with them, it would ease the hunger and thirst he has suffered for seventeen years, but this is not possible, so, he says, for the time being he can only do so vicariously through Dō'ei.⁽⁵⁰⁾

47 I will discuss this in another article, "What is Wrong with Japanese Confucianism? Zhu Shunshui on the Implementation of Confucian Ritual Forms in Japan," forthcoming.

48 Letter to Seian in *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 158.

49 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 156.

50 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 476–8.

Zhu Shunshui's Transition to Office

Zhu's chance to hold an official post in Japan finally came in 1664. Mitsukuni, who had ideas of founding a Confucian school, had heard of Zhu, and conceived the idea of recruiting him to help with this. He sent one of his Confucian scholars, Oyake Seijun 小宅生順 (?1637–1674), to Nagasaki to meet Zhu, evaluate his qualities, and explore the possibility of his coming to take service in Edo.⁽⁵¹⁾ Zhu's 'brush conversations' (*biyu/hitsugo* 筆語) with Seijun and his own writings reveal something of his state of mind during this process, from his first meeting with Seijun to his agreement to take service in the seventh month of 1665. It is plain to see how his Chinese-conditioned perception of his identity and status governed his actions and understanding of what was happening throughout. His decision to accept Mitsukuni's offer of appointment made him (along with the monk Yinyuan/Ingen 隱元) one of the most prominent and influential Chinese in Japan at the time, yet, as he himself must soon have realized – though he never says so directly – Mitsukuni's Japanese perception of his role was very different from the Chinese Confucian official that Zhu had always envisaged.

Seijun's record of his written conversations with Zhu during his three-month

51 Some accounts, such as Zhu's *gyōjitsu* biography, say that Seijun was sent to Nagasaki to meet great Chinese Confucians, and that he was the one who identified Zhu as the best candidate (*Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 618). However, the diary of Hayashi Gahō 林鶯峰 makes clear that Mitsukuni had identified Zhu specifically, and had already informed Sakai Tadakiyo 酒井忠清 (1624–1681) of the *bakufu* Council of Elders (Rōjū 老中) that he intended to summon Zhu. See the discussion in Zenan Shu, "Cultural and Political Encounters," pp. 127–9, based on Gahō's *Kokushikan nichiroku* 国史館日録, in Yamamoto Takeo 山本武夫 ed. and comp., *Kokushikan nichiroku* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Zokugunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1997), p. 42. See also Gahō's record of Mitsukuni telling him he intended to found a Confucius temple (*seidō* 聖堂) in Mito; this was in the third month of 1665 before Zhu's arrival. See *Kokushikan Nichiroku* vol. 1, p. 103.

stay in Nagasaki in summer and autumn of 1664 include two exchanges on the possibility of Zhu coming to Edo. In the first, Seijun expresses the wish that he could bring Zhu to Edo, so that he could have constant training from Zhu and improve his ability to express himself in writing. Zhu offers a modest demurral, saying that he has not studied properly for twenty years and could not match the talented men of Edo, and would not be of any benefit there, but then, though Seijun had only been speaking of the role of teacher, Zhu introduces the discourse of the Confucian in office:

Confucius visited the seventy-two lords in succession, seeking that the Way of the [True] King (*wang dao* 王道) be practiced even for a single day, but to no avail. For someone as mean and rough as myself to be able to realize such an ambition – how could this be other than my life’s greatest wish? But truly, I fear that your honoured country has been deluded by the perverted teachings (*xiejiao* 邪教, i.e. Buddhism), and I have never seen a single person [here] genuinely capable of practicing the teachings of the Sage. For the undertaking [of bringing about the triumph of Confucianism], it is essential for a lord and a chief minister (*jun xiang* 君相) to lead this jointly with all their effort. It is certainly not possible for one or two Confucian followers or minor officials in subordinate positions to change the course of an age. Thus I dare not accept your command. If there were an opportunity [to serve as minister to a wise ruler] and I deliberately declined, that would indeed be a great, great crime against Confucius.⁽⁵²⁾

52 Adapted from the translation in Zenan Shu, “Cultural and Political Encounters,” p. 148. This is part of Shu’s account of the meeting between Zhu and Seijun overall, much more detailed than that presented here; see Zenan Shu, pp. 126–142 and 147–151. The best original text for these written conversations is Seijun’s own compilation of them, preserved under the title *Saiyū shuroku* 西遊手録, postface dated the eleventh month of 1664, included in Shōkōkan’in 彰考館員 comp., *Shu Shunsui kiji zanroku* 朱舜水記事纂錄 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1914); for the current passage see pp. 4–5 of

He goes on to say that the influence of Buddhism is too pervasive for Confucian learning to make any headway. Seijun counters that with the right ruler in power, and a Confucian of broad attainment to guide him (obviously referring to Zhu), the influence of Buddhism could be countered and customs changed within a few years. And, he claimed, Confucianism was already making headway, as evidenced by the temple of Confucius in Edo and the twice-annual sacrifices held in it.⁽⁵³⁾ Zhu expresses delight that the situation is much better than he had thought, and once again employs the discourse of government:

Our [Confucian] Way manifests clearly before our eyes; every individual is equipped with it, every family harbours it. If government takes the great road, everyone alike will be able to practice it: superiors and inferiors, men and women, clever and foolish, capable and worthless. In a single step it will achieve its effect. With a wise and capable lord at the top, with a chief minister able to adhere strictly to it below him, there will be no need to wait several years – their customs will be swiftly changed. In ten years the moral transformation of the [True] King can be achieved – far more than a mere change in customs!⁽⁵⁴⁾

Throughout this exchange, Seijun seems to be speaking of a teacher, a man of Confucian accomplishment whose influence will spur the spread of Confucian teachings. Zhu, however, describes an enlightened sovereign *and* a wise chief minister under him, who are needed to achieve the Way of the King. He does not directly suggest himself as the chief minister, of course, but this is very much in

this text. These conversations have also been included in Zhu's collected works, but with substantial parts omitted; the current passage is in *Zhu Shunshui ji*, pp. 406–7.

53 The temple maintained by the Hayashi family in their school in Edo from 1633 onward.

54 Following the translation in Zenan Shu, "Cultural and Political Encounters," p. 149; original text in *Saiyū shuroku*, p. 5, and *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 407.

line with the way he had earlier explained to the Vietnamese and Japanese the status of a Confucian like himself as a 'treasure to the nation' deserving of a high position with salary and other markers of high rank.

Seijun's second mention of bringing Zhu to Edo, which took place near the end of Seijun's visit (Zhu says 'more than two months since we first met' during the relevant conversation), makes reference to a specific post, the head of a Confucian school. Seijun had previously shown Zhu a document he had written, 'Request to Found a National (or Domain) School' ('Qing xing guo xue shu' 請興國學書, elsewhere also referred to as 'Proposal to Found a National (or Domain) School,' 'Ni xing guo xue shu' 擬興國學書), and asked for criticism of the writing. Zhu seems at first to have only glanced through it quickly, and perhaps not taken it particularly seriously, saying only that it was well written, and noting that the distinction between relevant categories of writing ('manifesto', *biao* 表, memorial, *shu* 疏, and 'writing', *shu* 書) was more carefully observed in China.⁽⁵⁵⁾ However, it appears that Zhu retained the document, and one other, because in another meeting soon after he was full of praise for Seijun's writing. In the twenty years since he had first come to Japan, he had never seen a true 'man of letters' (*wenren* 文人), but now, after failing to see much in Seijun's writings after looking them over twice, he had read all the way through them carefully in the dead of night, and was so overjoyed that he had not slept. He had also read a piece by Hayashi Gahō, perhaps also given him by Seijun, which made it clear to him that 'the master of the nation' (*guo zhu* 國主, most likely Mitsukuni, with whom Gahō was on good terms) was determined to promote (Confucian) learning, which increased his joy still more.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Why had Seijun concealed these writings, and not

55 *Saiyū shuroku*, p. 11. This passage is not included in the *Zhu Shunshui ji*, though Seijun's thanks to Zhu for reading his proposal for a school, and their subsequent discussion of principles of good writing are included, on pp. 410–11.

56 Zhu refers to Gahō as 'Hayashi, Kōbun'in Scholar' (Lin Hongwenyuan xueshi 林弘文院学士). For a new analysis of the background of how Gahō came to be awarded this title in the twelfth month of 1663, and its political significance, see Shu Zenan 朱全安,

revealed them earlier? Zhu said he had not earlier been aware of Seijun's 'depth' (*shen* 深); in all the time he had come to Japan, he had seen only two people capable of such writing, Seijun and his own pupil Andō Seian.⁽⁵⁷⁾

This represents a striking change of attitude on Zhu's part. He had always treated Seijun with politeness and warm hospitality, and was willing to meet repeatedly with him, but this fulsome praise is something new. His own explanation, that he had looked through the documents twice, but only the third time read them carefully enough to appreciate their quality, seems somewhat farfetched. And how could he have interacted with Seijun – in writing – over more than two months without forming an impression of his talents? I think what impressed him was not so much the nature of the writing as its content: Seijun was proposing to establish a Confucian school, and in doing so was according with the intentions of Mitsukuni, a ruler in a position of political power. Seijun had already mentioned that he would like to bring Zhu to Edo, and it must have dawned on Zhu that Seijun was a conduit to political power, that Seijun and Mitsukuni represented an opportunity for him at last to hold an official post in an environment sympathetic to Confucianism, and be in a position to further the establishment of a Confucian school, Zhu's highest priority for the promotion of Confucianism in Japan.

Seijun, emboldened by Zhu's praise, made a concrete proposal to Zhu: if his plan for a Confucian school was approved by Mitsukuni, it would require a teacher. If circumstances were favourable, he would recommend Zhu for the position, at a salary sufficient to support seven or eight people. Would Zhu be

“Kōbun'in gakushi go shutoku ni miru Rinke no taibō: Bakufu bunkyō shisaku to no kanrensei no shiten kara 弘文院学士号取得にみる林家の大望——幕府文教施策との関連性の視点から,” *Chiba Shōdai Kiyō* 千葉商大紀要 50.1 (2012), pp. 21–35. Gahō was on good terms with Mitsukuni, and, as mentioned above, had recorded Mitsukuni's intent 1655 to establish a Confucius temple in his diary (*Kokushikan Nichiroku* vol. 1, p. 103).

57 *Saiyū shuroku*, p. 12. This conversation is not included in Zhu's collected works.

prepared to go to Edo if such a summons were forthcoming?

Zhu's response was predictable: the establishment of a school was an admirable project of enormous significance for the nation, and gave him high hopes for Japan's future. He himself was a man of modest attainment, not necessarily suitable to be summarily appointed to the post. How Zhu would respond to a summons was not dependant on salary, but upon the observance of ritual propriety (*li* 禮), and it would depend also on Mitsukuni's intentions. This was not something he could speculate on at the present moment.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Zhu's response to Seijun is entirely in keeping with his identity and sense of status in Chinese terms. As in his interactions with the Vietnamese king, he is making the point that the interaction between ruler and minister is governed by ritual propriety, and that the decision to become a minister is not one to be taken lightly. It is not just the prospective minister that is being judged; the ruler too is being tested, and if he lacks the appropriate qualities, a man of Confucian attainment (like Zhu) will not agree to serve. Zhu explained his stance in a later letter to Seijun:

In everything I do I am inferior to others, yet 'Wealth and status cannot corrupt me, poverty and degradation cannot alter me, authority and military power cannot subjugate me' – only in this, perhaps, can I be unashamed of having achieved one ten-thousandth part of the sages and wise men of antiquity.⁽⁵⁹⁾

58 *Saiyū shuroku*, pp. 12–13; *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 411. See also the translations and discussion in Zenan Shu, "Cultural and Political Encounters," p. 150.

59 Following the translation in Zenan Shu, "Cultural and Political Encounters," p. 145; *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 311. The text in quotes is from *Mencius* 3b/2, where Mencius describes the attitude of the 'great man' (*dazhangfu* 大丈夫): if he 'achieves his ambition' (*dezhi* 得志), he practices the Way together with the people (as a chief minister), otherwise he withdraws and cultivates the Way on his own.

This letter appears to have been written after Seijun left Nagasaki, but before Zhu took service under Mitsukuni. It was with such an attitude that Zhu considered Mitsukuni's offer of appointment when it did come, and by his own account he considered the offer for four days, consulting widely with many people, before accepting.⁽⁶⁰⁾

How did Zhu understand the nature of the post he was accepting? It is difficult to be sure, given the formulaic nature of the Chinese discourse he uses to describe the situation. We have seen that he spoke to Seijun using the language of high minister in relation to a ruler, when Seijun had spoken only of a teacher. In describing Mitsukuni, he explicitly compares him to Ji Dan 姬旦, the Duke of Zhou (Zhou Gong 周公).⁽⁶¹⁾ Andō Seian describes the relationship between Mitsukuni and Zhu as being the same as that of the Shang dynasty founder Tang to his wise chief minister Yi Yin (*Tang zhi yu Yi Yin* 湯之於伊尹).⁽⁶²⁾ This is of course formulaic language with a strong element of hyperbole, but underlying it we see Zhu's basic assumption that he was taking up an office that would allow him to wield some measure of actual power and authority, like an official in China, and contribute to the implementation of ideal Confucian government. The reality was rather different, as he must soon have discovered: he wielded no direct power of his own, and could only influence events indirectly, as teacher and advisor when consulted on specific issues. Mitsukuni treated him with great honour and respect, and seems for a time to have been genuinely interested in establishing a school and implementing Confucian institutions, but in the end he seems to have changed his mind, and very little of the advice Zhu provided ever came to fruition, especially during his own lifetime.

Zhu's true situation while serving under Mitsukuni is obscured by the idealized narrative on the relationship between them, which was perpetuated by

60 As he says in a letter to the former Nagasaki Commissioner Kurokawa Masanao 黒川正直, *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 76.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

62 *Shinsō shūgo*, p. 335b.

both men and all those who wrote about them. Zhu's writings contain nothing but high praise for Mitsukuni as an enlightened ruler, and his descriptions of his activities are all positive. Here and there, though, one finds subtle signs that not all was as bright as it seemed.

A key point of dissonance between Zhu's assumptions and the reality of the Japanese environment was the very different nature of political authority in China and Japan. Zhu thought in terms of a meritocratic order based on Confucian learning and cultivation, with qualification for office determined by the examination system, while in Japan entitlement to office was inherited, unconnected with Confucian attainment, and meritocratic ideas were potentially subversive. Zhu reconciled himself to this to some extent, by conceiving the hereditary daimyō and their officials in Chinese terms as equivalent to the hereditary feudal lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) and their vassals in the ancient Zhou period in China (which in fact had already occurred to the Japanese). This made it possible for him to find precedents for the Confucian rituals appropriate for them in ancient texts. However, he never abandoned his own automatic assumptions on this, which we can see, for example, in his praise for the daimyō Nabeshima Naoyoshi, when the latter promoted the lower-ranking Shimokawa Sansei 下川三省 as a young man of talent and gave him the chance to study with Zhu.⁽⁶³⁾ And, it seems that Zhu hoped that a meritocratic order would come to exist in Japan through the spread of Confucian schools. In a letter to the Mito Confucians Oyake Seijun and Hitomi Bōsai 人見懋齋 (1638–1696) he describes the effect on society of a school, a 'palace of learning' (*xuegong* 學宮), in the following terms:

The son of a farmer may rise to the post of Minister of War or Minister of the Masses, and decide on appointments to official posts; the offspring of a family with the cap and tassels [of high office] may be transferred to the remote hinterland, as punishment for indulging a weak will. In the course of

63 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 68.

such rises and falls, people naturally are put in a position where they have no choice but to exert themselves to do good, and expunge all evil and pernicious thoughts. The state will rely on the effect of perfected virtue and accomplished talent, and the family will teach the regulations of intimacy and respect, of filial and fraternal devotion, so that models reach a state of optimal goodness.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Obviously this ideal meritocratic vision is fundamentally at odds with the hereditary Japanese order.

In the same letter we find also an example of the misalignment between Zhu's understanding of the function and authority of an official and the Japanese view. Zhu believes Mitsukuni is making a mistake by planning to build the Confucius temple in a remote location rather than in a prominent, visible location in the capital of Mito domain, and cannot understand why Seijun and Bōsai do not persuade Mitsukuni of this ('You two Elder Brothers should not simply remain silent!' *er xiong yi wu mo mo er yi* 二兄宜無默默而已).⁽⁶⁵⁾ For Zhu, officials have the traditional authority, and the duty, to remonstrate (*jian* 諫) when the ruler goes astray. He expects Seijun and Bōsai to behave like Chinese Confucian officials, but in Japan subordinates are expected to demonstrate loyalty, and they accept Mitsukuni's decisions without question. Mitsukuni's power was his by right, and could not be challenged from a position of Confucian attainment.

Another, quite different, aspect of the dissonance between Zhu's perception and the Japanese reality arises from questions about the nature of the documentary record. Are Zhu's collected works in fact a true reflection of everything he wrote, or have they been subjected to a process of selection and alteration? Was the relationship between Zhu and Mitsukuni, and the circumstances of Zhu's life in Edo, really as described in the writings we have?

The Chinese scholar Han Dongyu argues that Zhu's collected works are not

64 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 322.

65 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 321.

entirely reliable, and isolates particular instances where he believes the veracity of Zhu's collected works is suspect. Overall, he notes the highly idealized way in which the relationship between Zhu and Mitsukuni is depicted, and the unflinching tone of caution and humility whenever Zhu mentions Mitsukuni, which leads him to suggest that Zhu's writings as transmitted have been subjected to a process of selection and editing. Zhu's actual life was highly circumscribed, to the point where his contacts with relatives and Chinese friends was all but cut off, whether by the regulations of the Japanese authorities, or by Zhu himself. Two of Han's examples relate to Zhu's status vis-à-vis Mitsukuni, which he argues was not as ideal as described in the existing sources.

The first concerns the treatment accorded Zhu's grandson Zhu Yuren 朱毓仁, who came from China to Nagasaki in the twelfth month of 1678 in hopes of meeting Zhu. Zhu Shunshui's letter to Yuren after he arrived, telling him about Andō Seian, is very brief, and it seems that he felt no need to write at any length because he fully expected to see him in Edo quite soon. Yet in the end Yuren did not remain in Japan to care for his grandfather, as Mitsukuni seems to have intended, but returned to China to report back to his (Yuren's) mother. Various factors were at work, but, as Han argues, one would have thought that a man of Mitsukuni's status would have been able to arrange permission for Yuren to make a short trip to Edo, yet this did not happen during the seven or eight months that the young man was in Nagasaki.⁽⁶⁶⁾

The second case occurred somewhat earlier than this, in 1671, and concerns Zhu and Mitsukuni's effort to bring Wang Yi 王儀, a longtime friend of Zhu's, to Edo. The initial request came from Zhu, and Mitsukuni responded wholeheartedly, making all the necessary preparations. In particular, Mitsukuni arranged a nice house for Wang, but Zhu refused this on grounds of principle: simply put, such generous treatment from Mitsukuni, on whom Zhu was entirely reliant, would be demeaning, as well as causing resentment among others. I believe Han Dongyu is correct in reading this as an assertion of status on Zhu's

66 See Han Dongyu, "Zhu Shunshui zai Ri huodong zaikao," pp. 103–4.

part, expressed with unfailing politeness, in the only way possible for him.⁽⁶⁷⁾ And, I would add, this gesture is fully in keeping with Zhu's self-perception in Confucian terms, and his stance vis-à-vis people in authority according to ritual propriety (*li*), as seen in his earlier dealings with the Japanese and Vietnamese as described above. Zhu's defense of his status was more important to him than bringing Wang Yi to Edo. No further mention of Wang appears in the record, and it seems likely that this rejection of Mitsukuni's generosity, no matter how carefully Zhu explained it, might not have been easy for the Japanese side to comprehend.

In fact, Han's suspicions about the selection and editing of Zhu's writings are confirmed by a Japanese scholar, Kurakazu Masae, on the basis of letters and other documents to and from Asaka Tanpaku during the time he was engaged in compiling the Mito edition of Zhu's collected works. These documents, held in Kyoto and the Ibaraki archives, which Kurakazu helpfully reproduces in a series of articles, give concrete evidence of the sort of pressures Tanpaku was under, which quite clearly influenced the selection of material for the final publication. Much was simply not included, planned for an additional 'outer collection' (*waiji/gaishū* 外集) which never materialized.⁽⁶⁸⁾ We have seen examples of this in the current study: Zhu's personal history (*lǐlǐ*) as preserved in Andō Seian's *Shinsō shūgo* is not in Zhu's collected works, and substantial portions of the written conversations between Zhu and Oyake Seijun have been cut, including material

67 Han Dongyu, pp. 104–5.

68 Kurakazu Masae 倉員正江, "Shunsui sensei bunshū hensan jijō (ni): Dai Nihonshi henzan kiroku o chūshin ni 『舜水先生文集』編纂事情(二)——『大日本史編纂記録』を中心に," *Kinsei bungei kenkyū to hyōron* 近世文芸研究と評論 66 (2004), p. 51. There is mention of material not in the main volume but planned for inclusion in a 'separate volume' (*bessatsu* 別冊), which Tanpaku hopes that Tokugawa Tsunaeda 綱條 (Mitsukuni's successor) will mention in his preface; Kurakazu Masae 倉員正江, "Shunsui sensei bunshū hensan jijō (yon): Dai Nihonshi henzan kiroku o chūshin ni 『舜水先生文集』編纂事情(四)——『大日本史編纂記録』を中心に," *Kinsei bungei kenkyū to hyōron* 近世文芸研究と評論 68 (2005), p. 91.

important to understanding the relationship evolving between them.

Content was altered as well. Tanpaku sought the assistance of Andō Seian, who systematically (and humbly) deleted all praise for himself from the writings he provided. Tanpaku discovered this, however, and sought the assistance of others in Yanagawa, and the original form was restored.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The pressure on Tanpaku mounted after Mitsukuni's death in 1701. Mitsukuni's heir, Tokugawa Tsunaeda 綱條, was less enthusiastic about the project than Mitsukuni had been, for reasons both financial and political; Kurakazu points out that Tanpaku's letters to him are painfully cautious and subservient as a result.⁽⁷⁰⁾

There can be no doubt that Zhu's writings as they have come down to us have undergone a degree of selection and alteration, which tends to obscure the true nature of Zhu's status and personal circumstances while in service to Mitsukuni. Nothing but high praise for Mitsukuni ever appears in his writings, though I think that this is due more to Zhu's own actual stance at the time rather than any subsequent editorial tampering. However, occasional criticism of Mitsukuni's subordinates does come through. An example of this is the resistance Zhu experienced when formulating designs for Chinese-style shrines for the rulers' ancestors in Kaga and Mito domains:

Among the men of your exalted land there are some to be sure who are capable and intelligent, but the rest, unaware of their own incompetence, open their mouths casually to find fault; in the end jealousy triumphs. I must meet face to face with the Chief Minister, the High Lord (Mitsukuni) to confirm each and every item before implementing it.⁽⁷¹⁾

69 Kurakazu, "Shunsui sensei bunshū hensan jijō (ni)," pp. 41–2.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

71 *Zhu Shunshui ji*, p. 282. See my discussion of Zhu's designs for ancestral shrines in Robert L. Chard, "Zhu Shunshui's Plans for the Confucian Ancestral Shrines (*Zongmiao* 宗廟) in Kaga Domain," *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 (Memoirs of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia) 164 (2013), pp. 21–52.

This example exposes the true nature of Zhu's position. He provides expertise, and is respected by Mitsukuni, but his influence is a reflection of Mitsukuni's authority. He is not an official who wields power in his own right. The subordinate officials, by contrast, do wield power, and are jealous of Mitsukuni's high regard for Zhu and his plans. This jealousy leads them to throw up objections at every turn, which I see as their way of reminding Zhu that they have political power, and he does not.

Most telling of all is the actual result of Zhu's activities during the seventeen years he served under Mitsukuni. He left a lasting influence on his students in Mito and Kaga domains, but the striking fact is that of the detailed technical advice he gave on Confucian ritual forms – ancestral shrines, the Confucius temple, rituals, and schools – very little was ever actually implemented during his lifetime. Mitsukuni, and Tsunanori in Kaga domain, continued to venerate the remains of their ancestors in Buddhist temples; the Confucius temple in Mito was never built, and only a rehearsal of the *sekiten* 稷奠 rite to Confucius ever performed by Mitsukuni (though it was enacted by Tsunanori in Kaga).⁽⁷²⁾ Mitsukuni's own writings suggest that he came to have mixed views on certain aspects of Confucianism, and in particular felt that the Chinese meritocratic order could not – and should not – be implemented in Japan.⁽⁷³⁾ Given Zhu's own keenness to ensure the adoption of Confucian forms in Japan, especially the

72 For the ancestral observances, see Chard, "Zhu Shunshui's Plans," pp. 39–41. For the Kaga *sekiten*, which was performed without a temple, using a wooden tablet (provided by Zhu) rather than a statue image of Confucius, see Kondō Iwao 近藤磐雄, *Kaga Shō'un* 加賀松雲公 (Tokyo: Hano Tomoaki Shuppan 羽野知顯出版, 1909) vol. 2, pp. 448–454, including a photograph of the tablet itself, which survives.

73 *Seizankō zuihitsu* 西山公隨筆, in *Nihon Zuihitsu-taisei Henshūbu* 日本隨筆大成編輯部, *Nihon Zuihitsu-taisei daiiniki* 日本隨筆大成第二期 vol. 14 (new edition, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1974), p. 385. For this reference, and the *sekiten* ritual in Japan more generally, I owe a great deal to personal discussions with James McMullen, who is preparing a major book on the subject.

school, this failure in the transmission of Confucianism must have become ever more apparent to him, and been deeply disappointing.

Conclusion

On the one hand we have Zhu's perception of his worth as determined by Confucian attainment, and his qualification for high office in Chinese terms. The sources present his service under Mitsukuni in formulaic, idealized terms: Mitsukuni the enlightened ruler following the Way of the True King (*wang dao*), recognizing the worth of Zhu, the wise Confucian minister, and according him the position and honour he deserved. This is the narrative that comes through in Zhu's writings right to the end. Mitsukuni, for his part, saw in Zhu his ideal of a loyal minister like Boyi 伯夷 of antiquity, whom Mitsukuni particularly admired; Zhu refused to serve the Qing, just as Boyi had refused to serve the Zhou. Mitsukuni's image of Zhu never changed: when Zhu died, Mitsukuni interred him in a position of high honour among his family tombs on Zuiryūsan 瑞龍山, with the title Zhu had chosen for himself: the Summoned Lord of Ming (*Ming Zhengjun*).⁽⁷⁴⁾

In terms of the transmission of Confucianism, we can posit a quite different reality. Zhu's aspirations become ever more circumscribed, and Mitsukuni backed away from much that he had originally planned to do with Zhu's help. On a personal level too, Zhu was isolated: Mitsukuni was solicitous in his care for him, but Zhu had little or no contact with Chinese people, and he never seems to have learned much Japanese. Only his students from Mito and Kaga must have been a source of comfort and hope; the younger ones learned to speak Chinese, and he dedicated much effort to their training, hoping that they would exert a long-term influence in Japan. But he himself was often ill, and must have felt isolated and frustrated. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his was a sad and tragic end in a society and cultural milieu which operated by very different

74 Ishihara, *Shu Shunsui*, p. 172.

rules, and a place not susceptible to Confucian changes in the way that he had hoped. Key to this is the very different nature of official power in China and Japan, a barrier to the transmission of all those aspects of Confucianism which contributed to self-improvement and the variable definition of personal worth and status.

In China, Confucianism drove political power. Confucian learning was inherently political: it was in itself a source of power, in that men could master it and hold office, and rulers were obliged by long tradition to adopt the forms and trappings of Confucianism to establish legitimacy of government. This was how Zhu perceived the natural order, and though he must have comprehended the hereditary order in Japan, he seems to have thought that Confucian schools would spread and eventually inspire a meritocratic system in Japan as well.

In Japan, the situation was just the opposite: political power drove Confucianism, in government at least. Confucian learning was a resource to be tapped by those in political power. Rulers could choose aspects of it to use, or not. The learning itself entailed no political power, and no one held political power purely through the mastery of Confucian learning. Mitsukuni honoured Zhu as a teacher and a man of wisdom who could guide his own exercise of power. He never thought of him as a minister with power of his own. Confucianism was to him useful for providing moral instruction to his people and a better administrative order, but he had no interest in creating a Chinese-style meritocracy. A genuine transmission of Confucianism of the sort Zhu thought he was leading ran up against an absolute cultural barrier.