



April 2008

The Rise of Early Modern Japanese Nationalism and its Correlation with the Japanese Perspective of Ming-Qing Transition in China

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Abstract

Many historians consider Japanese civilization developing along a distinct track against that of the Asian mainland and in particular, China, since the *Heian* period (794 – 1185). They believe the Japanese then began to shift their attitude toward Chinese civilization from assimilating at full scale to selectively adopting, and to gradually nurture and accumulate their native cultural tradition (a.k.a. *kokuhubunka* in Japanese). Selectively adopting implies that the Japanese central authority mainly focused on domestic affairs, while still kept an eye on the development of China and imported any of her achievements which might benefit the Japanese state. According to that theory, many argue that the subsequent Chinese dynasties and her tributary states then made much less external impact on Japan, both her society and people, in the recent millennium; Japan would often tend to stay indifferently away from the movement and conflict in mainland Asia. Particularly during the Tokugawa period, a period considered by historians as the most isolated time in Japanese history, even though some dramatic changes took place in China and East Asia, many believe the Japanese still lived in their own world pacifically.

Comments

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Introduction

Many historians consider Japanese civilization developing along a distinct track against that of the Asian mainland and in particular, China, since the *Heian* period (794 – 1185). They believe the Japanese then began to shift their attitude toward Chinese civilization from assimilating at full scale to selectively adopting, and to gradually nurture and accumulate their native cultural tradition (a.k.a. *kokuhubunka* in Japanese). Selectively adopting implies that the Japanese central authority mainly focused on domestic affairs, while still kept an eye on the development of China and imported any of her achievements which might benefit the Japanese state. According to that theory, many argue that the subsequent Chinese dynasties and her tributary states then made much less external impact on Japan, both her society and people, in the recent millennium; Japan would often tend to stay indifferently away from the movement and conflict in mainland Asia. Particularly during the Tokugawa period, a period considered by historians as the most isolated time in Japanese history, even though some dramatic changes took place in China and East Asia, many believe the Japanese still lived in their own world pacifically.

In fact, this conventional wisdom is questionable. Much evidence actually suggested that there should be another point of view regarding to the history of relations between Japan and the continent. Therefore, this thesis is going to reveal how the real impact of political and social change in China and mainland Asia led to the change of political and philosophical thoughts in Japan; and how that helped to nurture the rise of early modern Japanese nationalism, particularly during the early Tokugawa period. While the main focus of this thesis is on politics and culture, other miscellaneous aspects, such as trade, will also be discussed as supplement.

Background

China and Her Tributary States in the Continent

The year of 1644 marked a watershed in both Chinese and East Asian histories. It was a year that the centuries-long transformation right started to take place. The fuse was the fall of Beijing, the capital of Ming China, from the Ming government to the peasantry rebels and then the nomadic Manchus, during April to June.

The Ming, a dynasty founded by the rebel leader Zhu Yuanzhang in 1368, was and is still perceived by many traditional Chinese intellectuals as one of the (in fact, the last) orthodox Chinese dynasties founded by the Han people, which succeeded in driving the Mongols away from China Proper since their brutal conquest from late 13th century. The Ming proved herself to be another flourishing era in Chinese history with eminent achievements in a wide range of areas, after the Han (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.) and Tang (618 C.E. – 907 C.E.) dynasties. Nerveless, after more than 250 years of reign, as other Chinese dynasties, the Ming began her inevitable downfall eventually. Beginning from 1627, famines spread out China and caused millions of starvelings to death. Moreover, the government mistakenly implemented a series of policies which were later proved to have aggravated the hardship of the society. Since then, thousands of peasants armed themselves and upraised for survival. Among hundreds of rebel forces, the one led by Li Zicheng (a.k.a. “Chuang Wang”), was most

important and successful. His army gradually became one of the more serious threats to the Ming government over some ten years. But this was not the end. Another more dangerous threat, potentially, coming from the northern border, was the Manchus. The Manchus are believed to be a group of exotic nomads migrated from Siberia. As one of the many Tungusic speaking peoples, they were closely associated with the Mongols both ethnically and linguistically. The Jurchens, who were perceived as the ancestors of the later Manchus, established the Jin dynasty in north China and drove the Han Chinese to the south during 12th to 13th centuries. Then they declined after the rise of the Mongol-ruled Yuan until the late Ming. Around late 16th century, the Manchus/Jurchens rose once again under the leadership of Nurhachi, the first Great Khan of the unified Manchu tribes for the first time after the Jin dynasty. By the early/mid 17th century, the Manchu-ruled later Jin had replaced the Mongols' role and became the most dangerous threat to Ming from the north.

After some decades of political and military struggle against those two main rivals, the so-called Mandate of Heaven finally came to the end for the Ming authority in 1644. The eventual dramatic consequence was led and accumulated by a series of coincident-like outbreaks. On April 25, Li Zicheng's men sacked Beijing, prompting Chongzhen, the last emperor of the Ming Dynasty, to commit suicide. Not long after Li claimed himself as the emperor of China, the invading Manchu army, with the help of former Ming general Wu Sangui, captured Beijing on June 6. Since then, the Manchus began their full-scale conquest war over China and the Han Chinese, both

the remaining Ming power and rebel forces such as Li's. The conquering was not accomplished until the final fall of Taiwan in 1683. After a 39-year war, the nomadic Manchus succeeded in controlling the entire territory which Han people traditionally resided in. This was also the second time that Han people fell completely into a conquest by a foreign nomadic people in history (the first time happened in 1279, while Han China, represented by the Song dynasty, fell to the Mongols).

Just as the fall to Mongols in 13th century, the fall of Ming China to the Manchus in 1644 had not only a significant impact on Chinese people and society per se, but also the East Asian region as a whole. This later dramatically changed the East Asian political map and more profoundly, mutual cultural reorganization.

During the period from 1644 to 1683, the confrontation in China Proper was ongoing fiercely back and forth. Meanwhile, it is highly notable that similar confrontation was also happening in China's neighboring tributary states in response to the transformation back in China, but in some different ways.

Korea was an adequate example. Korea was then under the rule of the House of Yi's Choson dynasty, a traditional and extremely loyal tributary East Asian state for Ming China¹. In the past several hundred years, Choson Korea and Ming China had not only built up a tight, but even a filiations-like association. The tightness of such relationship was brought to the highest after Ming assisted Choson enormously

against the Hideyoshi invasion from Japan during 1592-1598. On the early stage of the long lasting Ming-Manchu war, Choson was always Ming's firmest ally both diplomatically and militarily. Choson's kings and officials, along with common people, all considered the Ming as the land of superior and orthodox civilization while in contrast, the Manchu as a clan of barbarians². In order to make the home front secure when fighting against the Ming, all early Manchu leaders realized the importance of wiping out the threat from Korea. Therefore, in 1627 and 1636, Manchu (Later Jin)'s second Khan and Qing's first emperor, Abahai, launched two expeditions to Korea himself and finally made Choson surrender and subject to the Qing. Since then Choson Korea had terminated her tributary relationship with the Ming formally and began to recognize the Qing as her new suzerain. But Qing's intention of making Choson an ally as how she used to treat Ming was still far from being fully achieved at this point. That was not fully attained until as late as early 18th century, almost another one hundred years from Choson's formal surrender. This was largely because of the high psychological complexity of political and cultural recognition toward the non-Han ethical conquerors in Choson Korea.

Korea had long seen herself as the "best student" of China and her civilization³. The Koreans transplanted almost every single piece of Chinese culture and achievement into their own society, from the writing system to Confucian ideology. Therefore, similar to the Chinese per se, the sense of "differentiating the *Hua* (civilized peoples) and the *Yi* (barbarian peoples)" was strongly rooted in Korea, and somehow even

much more reiterated. Thus when the king of Korea of the time declared the surrender to Abahai, some *Yangban* officials committed suicide, because they thought Korea had betrayed her “parent state” – Ming; the country was unable to overturn the military defeat and had to genuflect to the barbarians in an extremely humiliating way. They considered it great shame if they continued living in the world as well educated Confucian literati⁴.

That was just the beginning. What made the situation in Korea even harder was the fall of Beijing to the Manchu force in 1644. Upon the occupation of the capital, patriots and courtiers of the Ming instantaneously advocated a member of the royalty and restored the central government in Nanjing, southern China. Although this regime was soon crushed by the Manchus in 1645, various governmental and nongovernmental resistances in mainland China were not completely suppressed until 1663, and as late as 1683 for anti-Manchu resistance in Taiwan. During these forth years, disputes and discussions related to China were never stopped back in Korea. Even Korea’s domestic politics was affected to a great extent by the situation in China. There were two schools competing against each other at the time. One of them, the “Westerners” led by Song Si-yol, suggested that Korea must repay the “debt” to Ming by helping and saving her from the barbarians, thus the balance of the world could be restored; another school, the “Southerners” led by Yun Hyu, nevertheless argued that as the Ming had fallen to the barbarians, she was no longer worthy of Korea’s respect and Korea now became the island of civilization in a

barbarous sea. The King Hyojong (1649 – 1659) eventually chose to support the Westerners and made their proposals as the cornerstone of his foreign policies. He even made a concrete plan as the “Northern Expedition” for the sake of saving the falling Ming⁵. Meanwhile, though Korea had already become a tributary state for the Qing in formality, the king and his courtiers still kept secret but close contact with various exile anti-Manchu forces in China. Koreans had tried all means to restore Ming’s authority in China for more than 50 years or so but unfortunately, in vain eventually.

After realizing the impossibility to restore the Ming in politics and military, trend of thoughts in Korea began to turn around. The thought of the “Southerners”, which was once declined, began to regain its popularity. By the mid-18th century, this though had strengthened its position in Korea and among common Koreans, that is, most Koreans had felt that they were by then the only real civilization left on earth which had the legitimate qualification to inherit the orthodox Chinese civilization. China herself, conversely, had lost the Mandate of Heaven so that she should no longer be worshiped as the center of East Asia’s civilization as previously. In this process of mind-shifting, a new and more nationalism-oriented appreciation for Koreaness has also been nurtured. It made Korea more and more culturally independent of the traditions of China⁶.

Similarly process and struggle also took place in other China’s tributary states at the

time, such as Vietnam, etc. But for Japan, a state had been outside of the Chinese sphere for hundreds of years by the time, her change or impact, if there was any, was obscure. So, had Japan also undergone such a transformation in her civilization, especially in terms of nationalism just as Korea and Vietnam?

Japan around the time

Despite the fact that the third shogun of the Muromachi *bakufu* (1336 – 1573), Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, formally accepted the title of the “King of Japan” conferred from the Yongle Emperor in early Ming, Japan had little contact with China at formal diplomatic level throughout the Ming dynasty⁷. The historical span of the Muromachi *bakufu* in Japan almost coincided with that of the Ming in China. Parallel to China’s chaotic situation in late Ming, Japan also experienced a long period of turbulence, starting from late Muromachi period. The state thereafter entered into the Warring States period until the reunification under Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1590’s. Upon his great achievement in domestic affairs, Hideyoshi launched two invasions to Choson Korea in 1592 and 1597 respectively, but were both defeated by the joint force of the Ming and Choson. Hideyoshi died soon after his failure in the Korean peninsula. What came after Hideyoshi’s death was another chaotic, but rather short period. By 1603, Japan had been once again and ultimately reunified by Tokugawa Ieyasu, who later established the Tokugawa *bakufu* (a.k.a. the Edo *bakufu*, 1603 – 1868) and

made Japan into a pacific but highly isolated era for more than two hundred and fifty years.

The relation between late Ming and early Tokugawa Japan had traditionally been deemed as nongovernmental but highly developed in commercial sense. Maritime merchants from Ming China were at the time, along with those from the Netherlands, the only ones from a foreign country to which the *bakufu* granted the right to trade in Nagasaki, the only opening trade port in Japan after the shogunate announced the injunction for free foreign trade in 1641 (as a part of the *sakoku* policy)⁸. While such maritime trade kept flourishing till the end of Ming, formal diplomatic relation was barely set up.

On the other hand, and it might also attribute to the prosperity of trade, intellectual exchanges never stopped, even during this most isolated period in Japanese history.

The First Episode: Japan's First Reaction (1644 – 1659)

Considering the distinct perspectives that Korea and Japan had at the time perceiving China, it was rather surprising when the *bakufu* heard the fall of Beijing to the Manchus, its first direct reaction was to propose a plan of military assistance to the Ming against the Qing⁹. This was very similar to Korea, and what made the two states even more similar was that many people also voiced in Japan that they should save the civilization from the barbarians. As Japan had not been in the Chinese sphere for years, how could this situation even happen?

Though having bare direct bilateral relation between the two states since early 15th century, Japan still appreciated the eminence of China and her civilization, particularly under the Ming, to a great extent. During the late Muromachi *bakufu* and early Tokugawa *bakufu*, many important intellectual thoughts and achievements were imported into Japan and impacted the society profoundly. One of the most significant symbols was that different schools of Confucianism replaced Buddhism and became the dominant political philosophy in Japan under the Tokugawa *bakufu*¹⁰. And among which the Zhu School of Confucianism was certainly one of the most influential thoughts. Seika Fujiwara was the founder of the Japanese Zhu School.

Despite the fact that it had been imported into Japan since as early as 5th – 6th century, Confucianism did not really began flourishing at full scale in Japan until

Tokugawa shoguns came to power. The explanations vary today, but many historians think that it was because the *bakufu*, for the sake of strengthening the rule over the state, intentionally promoted Confucianism over Buddhism since the core ideas of Confucianism contained many features which could enhance the legitimacy of *bakufu's* rule. Confucian scholars appreciated the importance of hierarchy, order and obedience for the statecraft. These exactly matched the need of *bakufu's* rule. Tokugawa *bakufu* divided people in Japan into four classes (*shi-no-ko-sho*) and set up strict regulations for local warlords (*daimyo*) to behave¹¹. To make *bakufu's* position orthodox as the central authority, it then applied Confucian ideas to a large extent. The thought of Confucian legitimacy did not only impact Japanese domestically; but also Japanese' ideology concerning the world beyond the border.

Based on Confucian ideas, Ming was perceived by Japanese as the orthodox regime in China, though there was bare official contact and even sometimes fierce confrontation (e.g. the *Wako* pirates and the 1592 invasion of Korea) happened in the bilateral relation. Many well educated Japanese scholars considered China, represented by Ming, was still the land of sage and wisdom as it had always been. Therefore, when the Japanese knew what happened in China though merchants coming to Nagasaki, they were shocked. The third shogun of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, Iemitsu, immediately responded with a proposal of sending troops to help the exile Ming to restore the regime. Meanwhile, there were also requests directly coming from anti-Manchu forces in China to the *bakufu* for military assistance time after

time, which summed up to as many as 17 times in total until 1680s¹². However, this proposal fell into great dispute in Japan domestically. Though a number of scholars from the literati class support the proposal, many people considered this external affair thus Japan should not intervene to break her state of national isolation. Under pressures from both sides, Iemitsu was hesitant. He finally made the decision to send troops in early 1650s¹³. Nevertheless, just after he made up his mind, the leading anti-Manchu government, the Longwu regime of the Southern Ming, fell to the Manchus. Since then, large scale resistance in mainland China had began to collapse. And seeing that military success as the watershed, the Manchu Qing dynasty had largely strengthened her conquest and rule over entire China. This incident deterred Iemitsu when he was just about to launch the expedition to China. Thereafter, though the shoguns of the *bakufu* occasionally assisted Zheng's anti-Manchu force in Taiwan with weapon supply until its final fall in 1683, Japan had no plan in the sense of direct military intervention any longer.

Comparing with many other bilateral events which historians considered much more important in history, the idea, as well as the intention, of Japan's military intervention to China at the time was very momentary. It was even rarely mentioned in the historical record of Sino-Japanese relation. Nevertheless, this under-studied phenomenon really should have aggregated scholars' high attention, as it indicated many unique characteristics of Japanese' perspective regarding China at the time.

First of all, though being outside of the Chinese sphere for years, Japan still considered China as the center of the East Asian world in a subconscious way of thinking¹⁴. What made this psychological recognition more notable was that it was immediately after the war between Ming and Hideyoshi's Japan in the Korean peninsula, which happened not more than fifty years ago. However, Japan still reacted to China's change in the same way as Korea did. This should show the idea of Sino-centerism had been deeply rooted into Japanese' mind, though foreign relation was in hardship. In fact, this should be deemed parallel to the world view from Japan during early Tokugawa, which emerged as a tri-party picture containing Japan, China and India, with China in the center. Therefore, Japanese and the scholars in particular felt that sending troops to China was their obligation to save the center of the world from falling to the barbarians; this also matched the idea of Confucianism that sages should "obey the kingship and drive away the barbarians."

Secondly and also undoubtedly, actual national interest was surely another important driving force for Japan to intervene China. Japan had the blueprint of conquering the continental Asia as well as the world since Hideyoshi, which was why he launched massive troops to invade Korea and tentatively Ming right after the reunification of Japan¹⁵. After being defeated by Ming and Choson, Japan's expedition plan to the continent came to a temporary silence. Shoguns and *daimyos* began focusing more on domestic affairs. However, after the settlement of domestic turbulence, the idea of continental expansion was brought up onto the table once

again. Facing the dramatic political change in China, many Japanese, especially thought it was a great opportunity to both revenge on China and contend for rulership in East Asia. Though this seemed very reasonable for Japan to intervene based on the maximization of her national interest, another group of conservatives feared and argued that Japan would be hurt if she decided break the isolated status by engaging actively in China. Considering the potential financial cost and military sacrifice, that could lead Japan from a just-settled situation into another domestic chaos. Japan might also even face the danger of the Manchu invasion if she did so, as the Mongol invasion, which happened around four hundred years ago.

After all, Japan gave up the option of assisting Ming in the end. But new trends in other field, namely, culture, politics and philosophy, began to impact Japan profoundly.

The Second Episode: Exiled Ming People in Japan and their Legacy (1659 – 1683)

When large scale military resistance gradually began ceasing in China, many disappointed Confucian scholars chose to flee overseas instead of surrendering to the Qing court. This wave of movement made a direct and prominent impact on Japan and especially her elite class. While Japanese realized there was no more hope for China to restore her orthodox regime per se, they began to recognize the importance of those exile intellectuals from the declining Chinese world and appreciated them as the great teachers for Japanese, then the Japanese society went further and started considering themselves as the legitimate inheritors of the orthodox Chinese civilization. Among hundreds of Ming exiles, Zhu Shunshui was considered one of the most important figures.

Zhu Shunshui was born in Zhejiang province in 1600. Before fleeing to Japan, he had already been considered as an eminent scholar during late Ming, along with the others including Huang Zongxi, Gu Yangwu and Wang Fuzhi¹⁶. Same as other patriots of the Ming dynasty, he had tried to restore the court by all means after the year of 1644. From 1644 to 1659, he went to Japan seven times and Vietnam six times to request for military assistance, during which he almost lost his life for several times. After his seventh journey to Japan in 1659, he realized the hard situation had made the restoration of Ming impossible, and then he decided to stay in Japan without

returning to China any longer¹⁷. This decision let him live in Japan thereafter until his death in 1682.

At the time in Japan, the *bakufu* had announced and implemented the injunction for foreign exchanges. It even applied for merchants, among whom only Chinese and Dutch were allowed to trade only in Nagasaki. It was certainly much harder for foreign citizens like Zhu to reside in Japan. But due to his superior prestige in Confucian scholarship, the government made the exception for him to live in Japan as a foreigner¹⁸. Among the people who helped him to settle down and spread out his knowledge in Japan, several figures stood out, including Chen Mingde, Ando Morinari and Tokugawa Mitsukuni. Morinari and Mitsukuni were particularly famous for being his students and promoting his ideology in Japan later.

Zhu's contribution to the intellectual development of Japan included practical studies, idea of esteem to the kingship and central authority, appreciation of Confucian education and the idea of intellectual equity between China and foreign states. Practical studies criticized the inanity of theoretical approaches in both Zhu Xi's and Wang Yangming's thoughts. Zhu further suggested that theory should associate with the society and people, thus to facilitate the economic and social development of the state. As an orthodox Confucian scholar, Zhu also appreciated the significance of central kingship and feudal hierarchy, which exactly matched the political propaganda of the Tokugawa *bakufu* at the time. Zhu's emphasis on education made

him considered as the “Confucius of Japan” by later Japanese¹⁹. During his 22 year stay in Japan, he accepted a number of eminent Japanese students and most of whom later became masters of Confucianism and continuously made deeper impact on the Japanese society. Since he immigrated into Japan from China, it was also understandable and sensible that he appreciated the reception of the *bakufu* by recognizing and praising the intellectual eminence of Japanese scholars. By his death in 1682, the position of his school of Confucianism had been consolidated by him and his students in Japan nationwide with many extraordinary achievements. Among all of those, the compilation of the *History of Great Japan (Dai Nihon Shi)* was certainly one of the most important, which fully integrated Zhu’s theories and thoughts into words²⁰.

The *History of Great Japan* was full of Confucian spirit brought by Zhu. It recorded the history of Japan from the *Jimmu* emperor to the *Gokomatsu* emperor. An important emphasis of the book was the legitimacy the emperorship. It claimed that emperorship or kingship originated from the Mandate of Heaven thus it must not be violated by the subjects or foreign barbarians. An ideal Confucian state, in other words, a fully civilized state, must keep the Mandate of Heaven and have a well-ordered society in which social hierarchy persisted. That was to say, if a state could keep the lineage of the emperorship lasting forever, then the state would be an ideal model of Confucianism. From Zhu’s teaching of Confucianism and during the compilation of this book, the Japanese editors happened to increasingly deeply

realize such characteristics in fact existed in their own state, in which emperors' lineage never broke in history. Later on, as a major objective, the editors wanted to use this book to justify the god nature of the state of Japan. This book had thereafter made a huge impact on Japanese thoughts and helped Japanese to form the idea of the "god state".

Besides Japan had a non-broken lineage of emperorship, the theory of defining Japan as a "state of the god" was also based on fact that Japan had never been successfully conquered by any foreign invaders in recorded history, especially in comparison to the civilized states in the continent, such as China and Korea²¹. For example, Japan once faced a severe threat of invasion from the Mongols in late 13th century, who had already conquered both China and Korea by then; but the Japanese succeeded in slaughtering the enemy along with the help of the weather. This made Japanese believe their "god state" even more firmly in the sense that the state was under the protection of the god, and the family of the emperor was just the direct descendant of the god who had been protecting Japan for centuries.

As a grandson of Ieyasu and the *daimyo* of the Mito prefecture, which was considered to be one of the most reliable and intimate regional powers by the central *bakufu* at the time, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, was also both Zhu's outstanding student and the general organizer of the compilation of the *History of Great Japan*. His particular understanding to the god nature of the state of Japan went much

further with the gradual progress of the compilation. More remarkably, he was one of the first persons among Japanese intellectuals to proclaim the theory of the “inheritors”, which was a theory suggested that China’s neighboring states, in particular referring to Japan, should have the legitimacy and obligation to inherit the orthodox Chinese civilization, which had fallen to the barbarians and not existed in China any longer.

In the following two hundred years or so, Mito would become the center of Confucian study in Japan and more and more young people who abominated the rule of the *bakufu* and wanted to restore the authority of the emperor would come to study there. In a sense, Mito later became one of the key places where the theoretical foundation of the Meiji Restoration originated²².

First-hand Observations: Tokugawa Japan's Direct Contact with Qing China (1644 – Mid 18th Century)

Since the Tokugawa *bakufu* announced a strict injunction prohibiting Japanese traveling and residing overseas, Tokugawa Japan's contact with the rest of the world (in fact China and the Netherlands only) was totally inward-directional. That was to say, only foreign merchants (Chinese and the Netherlands) were allowed to come to Japan very temporarily without any single Japanese merchant going abroad and trading overseas. As the main and probably the only feasible channel to observe Chinese, maritime trade in Nagasaki, however, shrank tremendously after 1644 and did not fully recover until late 1680's. There were many reasons existing, one of the most important was that due to the existence of Taiwan as the last basis for the anti-Manchu movement (effectively from 1661 to 1683), the Manchu monarchs feared that exiled Ming loyalists could get contact with coastal residents and instigate uprising there²³. So they forced all coastal residents in China to move 30 *li* (15 kilometers) inwards, by which the coast was made a no man's land. Meanwhile, merchant ships were prohibited to leave China and trade overseas. Such situation did not change at all until Qing seized Taiwan and extinguished the last resistance in 1683. Upon then, maritime trade from China to Japan began to prosper once again.

Before this, the last wave of large-scale civil trade happened during late Ming from early to mid 17th century. Now it was the first time for most of the Japanese to

directly witness Chinese in some forty years. To a great extent, however, Japanese' perspectives toward Chinese changed much after a number of observations since then.

Japanese naturally compared the images of the Qing Chinese now with the Ming Chinese before, and the striking difference in physical appearance was highly visible. In order to smash Han people's traditional sense of superiority over other non-Han ethnic groups, the Manchu conquerors implemented the brutal policy of "hair shaving and costume changing". Namely, all Han people, especially men, were forced to abandon the thousands-year-long Han hair and costume style, but to follow the Manchu tradition, for which a man needed to shave all his hair on the forehead and keep a pigtail from the back of his head. The enforcement of this policy created massive uprising and resentment from Han people in early Qing. However, by Qing court's bloody suppression, this policy had been strengthened by the end of the 17th century, and all Chinese, including the ones going abroad, had been made to adopt the Manchu tradition.

When Chinese, with this kind of new appearance, debarked on the port of Nagasaki several decades later, Japanese first felt novelty then soon fell into speculation. Over time, Japanese thought since the Chinese had been barbarianized physically, it must gradually impact Chinese mentally, by which Chinese had lost their traditional, superior culture created by their ancestors²⁴. Through such comparison, many

Japanese suggested Japan should now take over China's traditional position in this region and become the center of the East Asian world and furthermore, the center of the world, since Japan's holy lineage had never been broken by invaders. Such attribute maintained the pureness and continuity of both the aboriginal Japanese culture and the authentic Chinese culture which was borrowed by Japanese in history. Now Japan should be considered as an island in the ocean of barbarians.

Change of Thought in Japan during Mid 17th Century to Mid 18th Century

As discussed earlier, although Japan had almost never officially accepted China as her suzerain in history, the degree of appreciation of Chinese civilization was always extraordinarily high in Japan. Because of that, Japanese considered China as a source of culture and spiritually thought her the center of civilization. However, with the fall of Ming, Japan began to realize the fact and reorient the position of both China and Japan in their mind.

In fact, Japanese began to realize that even though China was a great land of sage and wisdom, China did not necessarily exceed Japan in every single area, and in return, Japan did not have to bend herself to admire everything from China. This thought originated as early as in late *Heian* and early *Kamakura* period, but did not become largely popularized until then. In the following a thousand years or so after late Tang dynasty, Japan's basic attitude regarding China and herself emerged as isolation in politics, worship in culture and often flourishing in civil trade.

The world view from Japanese changed over time, too. The very traditional "world" in the eyes of Japanese consisted of three parties: Japan, China and India. The change of this sort of perspective began in 16th century, when Japanese fell into serious turmoil, cut off her relations with the continent and first met the Portuguese from the west. The successive world view, which was made up of three new elements:

Japan, Orient and Occident, began to emerge. In this view, China was no longer the center of the old “world”; instead, though her importance had been consistently appreciated, Japanese began to fit the image of China into a global system.

While China had been degraded in the eyes of Japanese, Japanese scholars started to emphasize the significance of their own land as a civilized hub and to study things outside the traditional Chinese cultural sphere, namely, the learning of the West. This learning began with the *Rangaku* (the Study of the Netherlands) in late 16th and early 17th century. As the learning moved on, Japanese found that they had been exposed to something which their ever big brother and teacher – China, had never taught them. Such knowledge, more commonly as known as the natural sciences, largely broadened Japanese people’s sight and made them more skeptical about the Chinese civilization.

Up to 17th century, Japanese scholars finally realized and recognized the decline of China, especially comparing to the rapid growth of the West. China used to be a sage land, but no longer worth admiring from Japanese.

Consolidation of Changes (Mid 18th Century to Early 19th Century)

With the influence from realizing Japan's more vivid national spirit and the historical legitimacy as a single-lineage state of the God, in particular comparing to the declining picture of the continent, early modern Japanese nationalism began to emerge in mid Tokugawa period. Japanese scholars split China and her history into two distinct parts, one was a classical and sage era, which had been ended by the barbarians; the other was the contemporary China, which depicted an image of ignorance, poverty and decline²⁵. Though making limited influence in the society, some Japanese scholars began to title Japan and her people as the legitimate inheritor of the orthodox Chinese civilization, namely, Confucianism, Buddhism, philosophy, literature and all other means of eminent cultural achievements originated in China.

The introduction and widespread usage of the term "*Shina*", which was adopted during mid 18th century as the official name for China, also reflected the change of thoughts regarding to China in Japan. Far from being consistent with the meaning of "*Zhongguo*" ("China" in Chinese), which literally meant "the Central Empire", "*Shina*" was borrowed from Sanskrit and was originally a neutral word as the country name of China. However, the meaning of "*Shina*" changed over time. Until the Meiji Restoration, "*Shina*" had become a word consisted of strong sense of prejudice against the Chinese. Besides, the kanji for "*Shina*" also contained a meaning of the

“branch” and alluded that China was no longer viewed by Japanese as the center of civilization, instead, the rising Japanese nationalism began to make Japanese think themselves as the real land of culture and furthermore, had the obligation to promote civilization into other outdated and barbarian Asian states, including China. This was also the origin of the Pan-Asianism²⁶.

By the eve of the “Black Ships” and Meiji Restoration, Japan had completely got rid of the Chinese shadow and influence over her own culture and furthermore, nurtured her own sense of world view and nationalism. This was also one of the reasons why Japan, but not the other similar-in-appearance Asian states, could be able to rapidly adopt the way of the West and soon began the process of westernization, then later became the only non-white-origin colonial power comparable to the West in modern history.

Conclusion

Many people have thought that Japan always tended to stay away from affairs happened in the continent and kept her isolated, particularly after early 17th century. However, the truth is that, Japan did not only stay away from the continent at all, but was also tremendously influenced from dramatic changes in the continent, namely, China. As shown earlier, an important fact in the origin of the early modern Japanese nationalism directly came from that influence, which later evolve into an impulse for the Meiji Restoration and caused one of the most significant progresses in Japanese history.

Note

1. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 157.
2. Wei Zhijing, *Zhong Han Guan Xi Shi Yan Jiu* (Zhongshan University Press, Guangzhou, 2006), 147.
3. Ibid., 150.
4. Ibid., 154.
5. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 162.
6. Ibid., 190.
7. Lynn A. Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws* (Yale University Press, 1993), 139.
8. Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Harvard University Press, 1992), 87.
9. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 187.
10. H.D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 212.
11. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 133.
12. Wang Youde, *Ning Bo Yu Dui Wai Mao Yi* (Ningbo People's Press, Ningbo, 2004), 87.

13. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 190.
14. Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (University of California Press, 1993), 211.
15. *Ibid.*, 102.
16. Tan Qiyun, *Zhu Shun Shui Dong Ying Shou Ye Yan Jiu* (People's Press, Beijing, 2005), 47.
17. *Ibid.*, 50.
18. *Ibid.*, 57.
19. *Ibid.*, 123.
20. *Ibid.*, 188.
21. Lynn A. Struve, *Time, Temporality and Imperial Transition: East Asia from Ming to Qing* (University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 257.
22. Tan Qiyun, *Zhu Shun Shui Dong Ying Shou Ye Yan Jiu* (People's Press, Beijing, 2005), 233.
23. Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming* (Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, Shanghai, 2007), 107.
24. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi* (Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006), 290.
25. *Ibid.*, 293.
26. Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (University of California Press, 1993), 200.

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3. Lynn A. Struve, *Time, Temporality and Imperial Transition: East Asia from Ming to Qing*. University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
4. Lynn A. Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws*. Yale University Press, 1993.
5. Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World*. Harvard University Press, 1992.
6. Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*. University of California Press, 1993.
7. Tan Qiyun, *Zhu Shun Shui Dong Ying Shou Ye Yan Jiu*. People's Press, Beijing, 2005.
8. Wang Gaoxin and Cheng Rentao, *Dong Ya San Guo Gu Dai Shi*. Industrial University of Beijing Press, Beijing, 2006.
9. Wang Youde, *Ning Bo Yu Dui Wai Mao Yi*. Ningbo People's Press, Ningbo, 2004.