The Transmission of Neo-Conf ucianism to Japan by Kang Hang a Prisoner of War

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THE TRANSMISSION OF NEO-CONFUCIANISM TO JAPAN BY KANG HANG, A PRISONER OF WAR

(*This article has previously appeared in the presentational volume for Dr. L. George Paik on the occasion of his 60th birthday*, Kukhak Nonch’ong (國學論叢) *Seoul: Sasanggye*, 1955)

If we remember that Confucianism and Buddhism were disseminated to Japan by Koreans and that Korea has been in the past the main channel through which the current of Asiatic culture from China flowed into Japan, it is not surprising to learn that the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung School was also transmitted to Japan through Korean hands. All that was needed were the historic occasion, the body of doctrine, and the person who delivered it. But what makes this transmission of Neo-Confucianism to Japan interesting is the peculiar character of these conditions, namely: (1) the Hideyoshi Invasion of 1592; (2) the newly dressed body of Neo-Confucianism which was elaborately worked out by Yi T’oegye (李退溪), perhaps the greatest Confucian scholar that Korea has produced; and (3) the deliverer being a prisoner of war, not a cultural ambassador. This historical instance is not only unusual, but it has the ironic character of the much repeated proposition that the conquered conquers the conqueror.

I. Its Historic Occasion

Its occasion was a war, a war which lasted for seven years with two waves of Japanese invaders sent by Hideyoshi Shogun (秀吉將軍) toward the end of the 16th century. Throughout history, one of the by-products of war which has a positive and enduring value, is the interchange of cultures between belligerent nations. Whether the process is the result of a deliberate attempt to implant one culture into another or a wholly unex-[page 84] pected outcome, the direct contact of diverse cultures tends to create the synthetic reconstruction of a culture. This synthetic sublimation is undoubtedly a step forward to cultural progress in the history of nations. Yet, we are not forgetful of the price that a nation or nations have to pay while the process is going on in the disturbances that the war causes. War drastically uproots the ordinary equilibrium of peace, order and the set pattern of living, thus forcing cultural specialists to proceed with their work in a most unusual situation. They at once become propagandists, hermits, prisoners of war, and refugees. But the undeniable fact is that they continue to achieve cultural products even in such circumstances, for to create is the essence of their life. The warmongers have not the slightest intention of cultural migration in war, but wartime disturbances make culture mobile, and from the standpoint of human history as a whole there is a process of cultural growth, as though there were an objective historical force which determines the course of history. In recent history we found a most eloquent example of this sort when the Nazi fanatics drove their scientists and thinkers out of their country. These men found a haven in America for their continued activities which have contributed not only to the cultural advance of American civilization but also of world culture in general.

Often it is the case that the conquered nation, ironically enough, conquers the conquerors culturally, especially if the conquered nation is advanced in cultural level. This phenomenon is not uncommon in past history. The Roman rulers persecuted the meagre and pacifist Christians only to be conquered eventually by the Christian religion. It was not an exaggeration when Tertullian said that “the blood of the Christians is the seed of the Church.” It is also a well known fact that although the Crusaders never achieved their initial objectives in the Mediaeval period, Europe has undergone social and intellectual changes due to the impact of Moslem culture. [page 85]

In the Hideyoshi invasion of Korea, 1592-1599, we find this situation in Far Eastern history. The Hideyoshi Invasion was militarily and politically a complete failure with regard to Hideyoshi’s fantastic dreams and objectives. To be sure, it brought a miserable devastation of Korean cities and villages; it cost the sacrifice of thousands of human lives; it resulted in the persistent enmity of the Koreans toward the Japanese for centuries to come. Hideyoshi’s mad ambition to overrun the peninsula, and his dream of conquering the Asiatic continent proved a futile illusion. However, viewed from the general context of Far Eastern cultural history, the invasion was indeed a reverse invasion, for it occasioned the cultural assets of Korea to flow into the islands of the invaders. The ironic fact is that the invaders shot bullets with new rifles which startled the residents of the peninsula, but Koreans returned shots of cultural bullets. Of course, this fact never entered the head of Hideyoshi, the master mind of the invasion. It is not entirely without reason that a Korean historian has remarked, “During the Imjin (壬辰) Japanese war, the Japanese studied in Korea by means of military aggression.”1)

This invasion in reverse is recognized by Japanese historians and we may glean the following facts esta¬blished by them. During the Hideyoshi invasion, according to Shidehara Taira (弊原坦), Japanese generals and soldiers got hold of Korean copper movable type and blocks and brought them to Japan, dedicating them to Hideyoshi. The copper movable type was new to the Japanese at this time, although Korean type had been in use since 1403. The first publication in this migrated Korean copper movable type is known to be *Daijo Ichiran* (大藏一覽) published in 1614. At this time, it is recorded that the Korean copper type on hand in Japan numbered

1) Quoted in Ch’oe Nam-sŏn (崔南善), *Kungmin Chosŏn Yŏksa* (國民朝鲜歷史 People’s History of Korea), Seoul: Tongmyong-sa, 1947, p. 140.

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200,000 pieces.2)

Again, the Japanese commanders were so fascinated by the excellence of Korean pottery that they were eager to seek Korean artisans ana as soon as they spotted them, they took them to Japan, making them the founders of the famous Japanese pottery which has been exquisitely developed since that time. Of this peculiar sort of hunting, Professor Sansom makes a pertinent remark: “Hideyoshi’s commanders took back to Japan with them Korean artisans and set up kilns in their domains. It is to these beginnings that we owe such celebrated wares as Satsuma, Nabeshima, Yatsushiro, Imari.”3)

One of the essential factors which enabled the Japanese Confucianists to take up Neo-Conf ucianism in the Tokugawa period was the shipment of classical books from Korea to Japan during this invasion. For example, it is reported that Shima ju Tadatsune (嵑津忠恒) brought with him 48 volumes to Japan in 1597. It is especially noteworthy that the list includes *Chujasŏ Chŏryo* (朱子書節要 Elements of Master Chu’s Writings), written by the Korean scholar Yi T’oegye, the representative of Korean Neo-Confucianism, a great systematizer and loyal successor of Ch’eng-Chu (程朱) philosophy.4) T’oegye’s philosophy was officially introduced to the Japanese Confucian circle

2) Shidehara Taira, *Chosen Shiwa* (朝鮮史話) (Essays on Korean History), Tokyo: Fusam-bo, 1924, p. 247.

3) Sansom, G.B., *Japan, a Short Cultural History*, Revised ed., New York： D. Appleton Century Co., 1943, pp. 439-440. See also Ch’oe Nam-sŏn, *Kungmin Chosŏn Yŏksa*, p. 145. The eminent Korean historian gives more specific information on this matter by furnishing the names of Korean artisans who were taken away to Japan.

4) See Oe Fumiki (大江文城), *Hompo Jugaku-shi Ronko* (本邦儒學史論放) (Studies on the History of Japanese Confucianism), Osaka Zenkoku Shobo, 1944. Another Japanese author, Tokutomi Joichiro (德富猪一郞), in his book *Shushi Yoka* (修史餘課 Notes on Historical studies) Tokyo Minyu-sha, 1931, shows that the total number of books looted by the Japanese from Korea is 2590 volumes, which became the library of Tokugawa Ieyasu (德川家康), but after his death they were distributed to various lords.

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by Yamasaki Ansai (山崎闇齋 1618-1682) in a later time and it won the deserved admiration of many Japanese Confucianists, but it is evident that most of his works were brought to Japan during the Hideyoshi invasion. It is to be noted that the Japanese Neo-Confucianists esteem T’oegye as one of the greatest scholars in the Far East since Chu Hsi (朱熹), and regard him as the sole connecting link between Chu Hsi philosophy and Japanese Neo-Confucianism. Inoue Tetsujiro (井上哲次郞) says of him: “T’oegye is the most outstanding scholar of Korea and his influence upon the Shushi school in Japan can by no means be minimized.”5) It is no accident that T’oegye’s educational philosophy became the basis for the famous Meiji imperial edict of five articles proclaimed in 1868.

**II. Its Body of Doctrines**

The reigns of Injong (仁宗 1545), Myŏngjong (明宗 1546-1567) and Sŏnjo (宣祖 1568-1608) of the Yi Dynasty were the golden age of Confucian studies in the history of Korea. It was during these reigns that the philosophers Sŏ Hwadam (徐花潭 1489-1546), Yi T’oegye (1501-1570) and Yi Yulgok (李栗谷 1536-1584) were most brilliantly engaged in the interpretation and exposition of Neo-Confucianism of the Sung period (960- 1279), which is known as *Sŏngnihak* (性理學) (Philosophy of Nature and Reason). It is true that the Korean Neo-Confucianists were, on the whole, loyal to the Chinese Neo-Confucianists and that Chu Hsi philosophy was considered as the orthodox philosophy among Korean Confucian scholars. However, the unique contribution of the Korean Neo-Confucianists lies in their systematic exposition and their further development of the specific problems with which the Sung masters wrestled. Therefore, it must be remembered that the Chu Hsi philosophy which was transmitted to Japan was not in its original

6) Inoue Tetsujiro, *Nihon Shusht Gakuha no Tetsugaku* (日本朱子學彼之哲學 Philosophy of the Japanese Chu Hsi School), Tokyo: Fusambo, 1933, Preface p. 7.

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form, but in the newly dressed form, elaborated by the Korean philosophers, particularly by Yi T’oegye.

Compared with Greek philosophy, it seems that the main emphases in Chinese philosophy came in reverse order. While Greek philosophy was first interested in cosmology and then followed with the ethical emphasis of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophers; in the history of Chinese philosophy the cosmological interest of the Sung period follows the ethical studies of the earlier periods. The Neo-Confucian interest in cosmology is, however, an exploration of the Taoist religion in which the cosmological views of the Yin-Yang School formed an important part, being influenced by the speculative philosophy of Ch’anism (禪學). Thus Professor Fung Yu-lan writes, “Neo-Confucianism may be said to be the logical development of Ch’anism.”6)

The speculative discussion of Neo-Confucianism centres around two basic concepts: *ch’i* (氣) (the vital force or matter) and *li* (理) (reason or principle).7) These concepts are introduced to account for the generation and changes of the universe. In an attempt to explain the process of cosmic evolution, the Neo-Confucianists find their clue in the “appendices” of the Book of Changes. In the “Appendix III” of the Book of Changes, it is said: “In *li* there is the Supreme Ultimate, which produces the two forms.” Chang Tsai (張載 1020-1077) identifies *ch’i* with the Supreme Ultimate. *Ch’i* (*ki* in Korean pronunciation) may be interpreted something like “matter” in Aristotle’s philosophy insofar as it is the principle of concretion and individuation. According to Chang Tsai’s view, the generation and changes of the universe are explained in terms of the condensation and dispersion of

6) Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948, p. 268.

7) Professor Chan Wing-tsit of Dartmouth College translates *ch’i* as “the vital force” and *li* as “reason” (see *Philosophy East and West*, edited by Charles A. Moore, Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 56). Professor Fung Yu-lan translates them “matter” and “principle” respectively.

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the *ch’i* in much the same way that the world is the condensation and rarefaction of the air in the philosophy of Anaximenes, one of the Milesian philosophers. However, the condensation of the *ch’i* fails to explain the reason for producing things under different categories. Thus the subsequent Neo-Confucanists were led to introduce eternal forms which they thought would mould individual things as they are, and the eternal forms are called *li* (reason or principle). Ch’eng Yi (程頣 1033- 1106) and Chu Hsi (1130-1200) thought that the universe as we see it was a result not only of the *ch’i* but also of the *li*. They seem to recognize Aristotelian “form” as the principle of individuation. In as much as Aristotle’s “form” is derived from Plato’s “idea”, Professor Fung is right in saying that the philosophical system of Chu Hsi is to be regarded as a school of Platonic Ideas.8) In interpreting Chu Hsi philosophy, Professor Fung writes: “Different categories of things exist, because the condensation of the *ch’i* takes place in different ways in accordance with different *li.*”9) In the words of Chu Hsi, “For the bricks of these steps (walking on the steps) there is the *li* of bricks. For the bamboo chair (sitting down), there is the *li* of the bamboo chair. You say that dried and withered things have no life or vitality, yet among them, too, there are none that do not have *li*”10) *Li*, in the Chu Hsi philosophy, is the particular nature of a thing, in the same way that Aristotle defines soul, which is the form of a body, as the function of a particular body. *Li* again, is not only prior to its manifestation in things but is also eternal. In this sense, Chu Hsi regards *li* as the Supreme Ultimate, as Plato’s Idea of the Good and Aristotle’s idea of God are the supreme concepts. From this point of view, Chu Hsi’s philosophy seemes to be akin to the metaphysical dualism of Plato.

However, Chu Hsi’s metaphysical position is not altogether clear. That he may be also classified as a

8) Fung Yu-lan, *Ibid*., p. 294.

9) *Ibid*., p. 285.

10) Quoted by Fung Yu-lan. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

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monist can be easily detected from the following passage: “There is but one Supreme Ultimate, which is received by the individuals of all things. This one Supreme Ultimate is received by each individual in its entirety and undivided.”11) It is difficult to classify Chu Hsi conclusively as either a dualist or a monist. Perhaps, he swings between these two metaphysical standpoints and comes out somewhere close to Hegel’s Objective Idealism. At any rate, Chu Hsi believes that *ch’i* and *li* are inseparable principles of the universe. He writes: “In the universe, there are *li* and *ch’i*. The *li* is the *tao* that pertains to ‘what is above shapes,’ and is the source from which all things are produced. The *ch’i* is the material (instrument) that pertains to ‘what is within shapes’ and is the means whereby things are produced. Hence men or things, at the moment of their production, must receive this *li* in order that they may have a nature of their own. They must receive this *ch’i* in order that they may have their bodily form.”12) Irrespective of the question of whether he is a monist or a dualist, it is clear that Chu Hsi recognizes the dual aspect of the creation of the universe. Still there are many questions that arise from his philosophical position. First of all, there is the question of whether these two principles are absolutely heterogeneous, or homogeneous elements of the universe. And if we admit the operation of these two principles, we are forced to ask the question as to the relative priority of *li* and *ch’i*. To this latter question, Chu Hsi’s opinion is not uniform. He seems to think, at one moment, that *li* is prior to its manifestations in the physical world, but at other moment, he insits that *li* is never separable from *ch’i*.

This ambiguity of Chu Hsi philosophy is precisely the point of departure for the Korean Neo-Confucianists. Korean Neo-Confucianists attempted to solve the problems of *li* and *ch’i* as logically as possible. So Hwadam, for example, was a monist who held that *li* and *ch’i* are

11) *Ibid*., p. 298.

12) *Ibid*., p. 299.

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not separable at all. On the other hand, T’oegye and Yulgok adhered to the dualism of *li* and *ch’i*.13)

There is another aspect of Chu Hsi philosophy which kindled a serious discussion of the Korean Neo-Confucianists. It is Chu Hsi’s application of *li* and *ch’i* to the study of human nature and mind. In discussing this problem, Korean scholars carried the logical development of Chu Hsi philosophy further and showed a great advance over the discussion in Chu Hsi’s own philosophy. According to Chu Hsi, the *li* of humanity is universally present in human nature and *li* for all men is the same, but it is the *ch’i* that makes them different. *Ch’i*, endowed with the physical nature of man, is the principle of constituting an individual mind. Since there is *li* in man, human nature is, as Mencius thought, ultimately good. Therefore, the *sadan* (四端 Four Beginnings, that is, human-heartedness, righteousness, propriety and wisdom), which Mencius spoke of, belong to *li*. But the origin of evil can, according to Chu Hsi, be traced back to the physical endowment for which the *ch’i* is responsible.

T’oegye takes up this problem of good and evil in man and expounds it on strictly dualistic lines. According to T’oegye, the *sadan* stem out of the *li*, and the *ch’iljŏng* (七情 Seven Feelings, that is, joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, evil, avarice), stem out of the *ch’i*. This dualistic exposition started off the famous controversy of Yi T’oegye and Ki Kobong (奇高峰) through correspondence, which remains one of the classic discussions in the history of Korean philosophy. In the course of this debate through correspondence, T’oegye seems to have modified his view to the effect that “the Four Beginnings stem out of *li* but accompanied by *ch’i*, and the Seven Feelings stem out of *ch’i* but are superimposed by *li* (四端 理發而氣隨之, 七情氣發而理乘之.).” Toegye seems to have

13) Hyŏn Sang-yun (玄相允), in his *Choson Yuhak-sa* (朝鲜儒學史 History of Korean Confucianism) gives the six greatest Neo-Confucianists. classifying Yi Toegye, Yi Yulgok, and Yi Hanju (李寒洲). as dualists, and Sŏ Hwadam, Ki Nosa (奇通沙), and Im Nongmun (任鹿門) as monists.

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arrived at this conclusion independently of preceding philosophers,14) but he was essentially in agreement with Chu Hsi’s dualistic thinking in that he persistently regarded human nature as genuinely good because it is derived from the *li*. Although Yi Yulgok’s philosophy remained within the scope of Chu Hsi philosophy, he developed the theory of mind further beyond the dualistic views of Chu Hsi and T’oegye by pointing out logical contradictions involved in their systems. Over against the emphasis on the priority of *li*, Yulgok denied the existence of *li* that is divorced from *ch’i*. Yul-gok’s monistic view is rigorously defended in his classic correspondence with Song Ugye (成牛溪) who followed the dualistic position of Chu Hsi and T’oegye. In Yulgok’s philosophy, it may be said that the Platonic dualism of Chu Hsi and T’oegye was modified in the form of Hegelian Objective Idealism.

Thus, Neo-Confucianism was transmitted to Japan by way of the Korean peninsula and it was actually Chu Hsi philosophy in the garb of T’oegye and Yulgok, in whose philosophies songnihak (philosophy of nature and reason) reached its highest logical development.

**III. Its Emissary**

In all cultural interchanges between two nations, there must be a cultural emissary who plays the noble role of transmitting an idea or thought. In the transmission of Neo-Confucianism to Japan, there was a historical point of contact made under curious circumstances between Kang Hang (姜沆 1567-1618), a prisoner of war, and Fujiwara Seika(藤原惶窩 1561-1619), the founder of the Kyo Gaku (京學), the first of the Shushi (朱子) philosophical schools in Japan of the Tokugawa

14) See Takahashi Toru (高摘亨) *Richo Jugaku-shi ni okeru Shuriha Shugiha no Hattatsu* (李朝儒學史に於 のる 主理派主氣派の發達 Development of the school of *Li* and *Ch’i* in the History of Confucianism in the Yi Dynasty) in *Chosen Shim Bunka no Kenkyu* (朝鲜支那文化の研究 Studies of Korean and Chinese Culture), Tokyo: Toko Shoin, 1929.

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period. It is ironic that Kang Hang was not a cultural ambassador sent to Japan with pomp and splendour, but was a victim of his nation’s destiny, being taken to Japan as a prisoner of war during the second invasion of the Imjin War. In spite of this unusual circumstance, it is interesting to learn that there existed an intellectual rapport between Kang Hang, a scholar of no mean ability, and Fujiwara Seika, a serious student of Neo-Conf ucianism.

Historians do not seem to realize the importance of this contact between Kang Hang and Fujiwara Seika, other than the acknowledgement that they met by chance in Kyoto. However, it was more than a fortuitous encounter of kindred minds. The significance of this contact lies in that Japanese Confucian scholars became better acquainted with Chu Hsi philosophy through the T’oegye philosophy which was introduced by this prisoner of war. H. B. Hulbert, in his *Korean History*, gives a brief mention of Kang Hang as a Korean teacher in Japan during the war. Hulbert writes: “He became a teacher of Chinese and had a large following of students who treated him very well and supported him in comfortable style. At the end of the war they clubbed together and bought a boat into which they put this man with all his goods and sent him back to Korea.”15) Hulbert adds that Kang Hang, upon his return, wrote his experiences in the book known as *Kan Yang Nok* (看羊錄 Relating of Adventures among Sheep, a sarcastic pleasantry), and that Kang Hang was familiar with the Japanese language. Hulbert however, does not give the details of Kang Hang’s experiences in Japan which we find in Kan Yang Nok.16)

15) Hulbert, H.B., *The Korean Review*, vol. 3, no. 4, April, 1903, p. 190.

16) Kang Hang’s literary works are known as *Suŭn Jip* (睡隠集 Collected Works of Suŭn—his pen name), which comprises four volumes, of which the third is *Kan Yang Nok*. The original title of the book was *Kŏn Ch’a Rok* (巾車鈴 Relating of Prisoner’s Chariot), but his disciples later named it *Kan Yang Nok*, recalling the story of Somu of the former Han Dynasty, more than two thousand years ago, who went to the northern countries as an envoy, but was imprisoned. Later, he was sent again to the Northern Sea to tend sheep. After 19 years of labour and hardship, he came home without betraying his king,

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In this book, Kang Hang writes of his acquaintance with Fujiwara Seika who had helped him escape from his imprisonment and return to Korea .The book also describes Japanese climate and myths, and presents Kang Hang’s understanding of Japanese history, language, geography and the background of the Japanese commanders who fought in Korea. It also contains his observations on Japanese castles, fortresses, the strength and weakness of the Japanese army samurai, feudal lords, and farmers. Kang Hang reports that Japan suffered a great deal because of wars and that the Japanese would not dare to build their houses solidly because of fire caused by wars, and that four out of ten of the male population were Buddhist monks for the obvious reason that they did not want to be involved in wars. One interesting passage is his description of Hideyoshi. He reports that Hideyoshi was a dwarf with monkey face (his pen name was Saru Ko—monkey’s son). He had six fingers on his right hand, so he cut one of them off. He won the confidence of Nobunaga, and secured prominence in Japanese politics. He was apparently a shrewd man, for he bought merchandise at a reasonable price for Nobunage, but what actually happened was that he partially paid for the merchandise with his own money. *Kan Yang Nok* also includes a memorial to the Korean king, presenting Kang’s conviction that the Japanese war lords were not in a position to re-invade Korea in the immediate future.

Here we have a typical Korean gentleman and scholar, even if he was a prisoner of war. Kang Hang was a man of honour with a sense of pride and a feeling of patriotism. Although he was a scholar and poet, he fought the war as passionately as any warrior. His sense of honour as a Confucian scholar prompted him to attempt suicide when he was caught by the enemy. That he resigned his government post upon his return from Japan after having been a prisoner of war indicates the sense of shame which emerged from his Confucian conscience. *Kan Yang Nok* reveals his sincerity and integrity as a Korean, his enthusiasm for learning, his keen [page 95] observation and sound judgment in understanding Japa--nese culture.

Kang Hang was born at Chinju (晋州) in South Kyŏngsang Province in the year 1567, of a family of nobility and scholars. He studied under Sŏng Hun (成渾), Master Ugye (牛溪), who was a contemporary and follower of T’oegye. Philosophically speaking, Kang Hang was indirectly a disciple of T’oegye. Passing the national examination at the age of twenty one, he made his name known as a gifted poet. During the Hideyoshi invasion, he obtained a government post as an officer in the Board of Justice, the title of which was Chwarang (佐郞). In the spring of 1597, he came home from the capital on vacation and when Hideyoshi sent his second invasion in the summer of the same year, he became an assistant commander to Yi Kwang-jŏng (李光庭) for the defence of Namwŏn (南原). When Namwŏn fell into the hands of the Japanese, he escaped to Yŏnggwang (靈光) where, with Kim Sang-jun (金尙儁), he recruited several hundred volunteers. But knowing that he could not possibly resist the swarming invaders, he got on board a ship with his family and relatives with the intention of joining Admiral Yi Sun-sin’s (李舜臣) fleet. He set out first with two boats: one was occupied by his father and uncles, and the other by Kang Hang with his brothers and the immediate members of his family. In the course of this voyage, he lost sight of his father’s boat, and while he was trying to find his father, he met enemy ships. In an attempt to commit suicide, he took off his clothes and plunged into the water, but the water being shallow, he was finally caught by the enemy. The captor was Sado Nobushichiro (佐渡信士郞), lord of Iyo (伊豫), who spared his life, for Kang Hang was an official of the Korean government. He was kept at Sunch’ŏn (順川) as a prisoner for about nine days, during which time, it is reported, he refused to take water and soybean sauce. Then, Kang Hang and his family were sent to Japan. After leaving Sunch’ŏn, they arrived at Ozu (大津) castle in the province of Iyo, where they stayed for eight days. [page 96]

It was perhaps due to his patriotic sense that he secretly copied Japanese official titles and Japanese maps with the help of a monk at Iyo. In June 1598 he was sent to Osaka (大坂) and in July to Fushimi Jo (伏見城) which was Hideyoshi’s new capital, Kang Hang stayed there until the spring of 1600 when he managed to return to Korea.17) It was during this period that Kang Hang made the acquaintance of a monk in Sogokuji (相國寺), by the name of Jun (蕣), who was none other than Fujiwara Seika. Upon his return to Korea, with a feeling of humiliation for the fact that he had been captured by the enemy, he resigned his government post and confined himself to a country house and spent the rest of his life in teaching youth until his death in 1618.

As in the economic law of supply and demand, in a philosophical exchange between one person or nation and another, we must recognize the reciprocity between the transmitter and the receiver. In the transmisson of Neo-Confucianism to Japan, Fujiwara Seika’s sincere and enthusiastic desire for mastering Chu Hsi philosophy must not be ignored. What was the intellectual climate of Fujiwara Seika’s time in Japan? After several centuries of the Dark Age of war and confusion, what was needed most in Japan to bring about peace and order was a new principle of politics, economics and education, which Buddhism had not been able to supply before the Tokugawa period.18) Japanese scholars found this new principle in the Neo-Confucianism of Sung and Ming, for it appealed

17) As for the duration of his stay in Japan as the prisoner of war, I have followed Kang Hang’s own account revealed in his *Kan Yang Nok*. However, Inoue Tetsujiro, in his *Nihon Shushi Gakuha no Tetsugaku*, reports that he was naturalized and lived in Tatsuno (龍野). *Chosenshi* (朝鲜史) reports that he was in Japan more than ten years (*Chosenshi*, the fifth part, 4th volume, p. 345). In view of the general situation of his time, the memorial he presented to the Korean king, and his travelogue handed down to us, his own account of the duration of his stay in Japan can reasonably be accepted.

18) See Fukushima Kashizo (ed), *Kinsei Nihon no Jugaku* ( 近世曰 本の儒學Japanese Confucianism in the Modern Period), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1939, Introduction.

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to the Japanese temperament because it was equally as speculative as Buddhism and furthermore, it offered much needed principles. It is not surprising to discover that Japanese Confucian scholars in the early Tokugawa period received their instruction from Buddhist monks. But the Neo-Confucian scholars lacked real teachers who could properly interpret this new philosophy to their satisfaction. It was precisely because of this situation that Fujiwara Seika, a Buddhist monk, was converted to Neo-Confucianism and attempted to go to China for instruction.

Fujiwara Seika, whose Buddhist name was Jun and who was styled Myojuin (妙壽院), entered the temple of Sogoku at the age of 18. At the age of 21 he became a friend and teacher of Akamatsu Hiromichi (赤松廣通) the lord of Tatsuno and a lover of Chinese classics. One of the chief motives for his conversion to Neo-Confucianism may be attributed to his meeting the three Korean envoys who went to Japan at the request of Hideyoshi two years before the outbreak of war, and who remained at Daitokuji (大德寺) for five months bef ore they were finally received by Hideyoshi. Seika visited them frequently there and communicated with them by writing and exchanged poems with them.19) From the fact that one of the three Korean envoys was Kim Sŏng-il (金誠一)20) who was a student of T’oegye, it may be inferred that Seika first heard about Neo-Confucianism and T’oegye philosophy from them. This casual taste of Neo-Confucianism stimulated Seika’s appetite for the mastery of this philosophy. Seika, eager to learn Chu Hsi philosophy at first hand, set out for Ming China by ship, but unfortunately he met a storm at sea ana gave up his voyage. Coming back to Kyoto (京都) he locked himself in a room and engaged himself in adding

19) See Nagata Gonjiro (長田權次郞), *Tokugawa Sambyakunen-shi* (德川三百年史 Three Hundred Year History of the Tokugawa Period), Vol, 2. Tokyo: Shoka-bo, 1905.

20) The other two Korean envoys were Hwang Yun-gil (黃允吉) and Hŏ Cham-ji (許成之).

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Japanese readings to the Four Books and Five Classics. The failure of his attempt to go to China enabled him to meet Kang Hang, with whose help he was finally able to quench his thirst for Neo-Confucianism. It was the second year of the Keicho (慶長) era, 1597, when Seika first met Hang at Akamatsu’s home. Kang Hang was greatly impressed by Seika when he first knew him, for Hang is said to have remarked, “I have not heard of a man like Seika in three hundred years of Korean history”.21) But the admiration must have been mutual, because Seika asked Akamatsu to take Kang Hang in as his house guest in spite of the fact that he was a prisoner of war. Furthermore, Seika asked Hang to write a preface to his, new compilation of the Four Books and Five Classics in the light of Sung Neo-Confucianism, an honour generally reserved for a competent scholar if not one’s own teacher. It seems apparent that they enjoyed most fruitful hours together during which time Kang Hang expounded and discussed Neo-Confucianism and T’oegye philosophy.

Seika’s interest in and enthusiasm for Neo-Con- fucianism are clearly manifested in his written statement to Kang Hang when he sought a preface by Kang. He wrote: “Japanese Confucian scholars, from ancient times to this day, are familiar with the Han and T’ang schools of Confucianism but are ignorant of the philosophy of the Sung scholars. Since I had no teacher from my childhood, I read the Chinese Classics all alone. I said to myself: Confucian scholars of Han and T’ang do not pass beyond the stage of writing and memorizing the Books without truly understanding the Holy Learning, and if it were not for the Sung Masters, the continuity of the Holy Learning would have been extremely doubtful. Lord Akamatsu in now freshly compiling the Four Books and Five Classics, asked me to add the Japanese readings at the side of the characters in the light of Sung philosophy, hoping that posterity may be benefitted by it. This is the original book, interpreted by Sung philosophy”.22)

21) Nagata Gonjiro, *Ibid*., p. 3

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Kang Hang was not only asked to write a preface to this book, but also was actually engaged in copying the book for Seika.23) Kang Hang also edited the following of Seika’s works: *Shi Sho Ka Ki* (是尙嵩記) *Seisai Ki* (惶齋記) and *Gokyo Batsu* (五經跃). In Kang Hang’s preface to Seika’s *Bunsho Tatsudoku Koryo* (門章達德綱領), Kang Hang’s estimate of Seika’s personality and scholarly attitude is eloquently given. He said: “Because the King’s power did not prevail and bandits acted with impunity, Kenbu (儉夫 Seika’s other name) enjoyed himself in solitude from his childhood. During my three years of stay in Japan, I have known the man and his learning since I first associated with him in the capital. His greatness is hidden, for he wishes not to be heard........ He welcomes the good with wonder, but he dodges evil like the wind. He pays no attention to what is not in conformity with the Way, even though it be a man of power and of nobility......... His learning is not confined to shallowness; he learned from no teacher. He understands the eternal truth by reading the Eternal Classics...... The fundamental method of his learning is to subject everything to the Heavenly Reason by checking one’s whimsical thoughts.”24)

Kang Hang’s own account of his relationship with Seika in *Kan Yang Nok* is vivid and charming. The following passages tell of Kang Hang’s acquaintance with Seika and Akamatsu, and relate his account of his return to Korea.

“Again, there was a Buddhist monk by the name of Jun, who is a descendant of the House of Kyogoku Komon

22) Nishimura Tenshu (西村天囚), *Nihon Sogaku shi* (日本宋學史 History of Japanese Neo-Confucianism), Osaka: Sugimoto Ryoko-do, 1909, p. 282, Seika’s claim to originality in interpreting the classics in the light of the Sung masters is questioned by Japanese scholars. Inoue comments that it was not Seika, but Giyo (岐陽) Keian (桂庵) and Nambo (南浦) who first gave Sung interpretations to the Four Books.

23) The Four Books that Kang Hang originally copied are still preserved in Naigaku Bunko (內閣文庫) See *Oe Fumiki’s Honpo Jugakushi Ronko*, p. 43.

26) Inoue Tetsujiro, *Nihon Shusht Gakuha no Tetsugaku*, p. 17-8.

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(京極黃門定家), and a teacher of Akamatsu Hiromichi, the lord of Tajima (但馬) Being a brilliant student, he understood the classics well and excelled in writing. His nature being upright, he was not easily swayed. Ieyasu, hearing of his talent and wisdom, offered him a house in the Japanese capital and granted him two thousand koku of rice annually. But Jun, refusing to accept this grant, remained with Hiromichi.

Hiromichi is a descendant of the emperor Kanmu (桓武) in the 9th generation. He was so ardently devoted to the study of the Chinese Classics that he never went about without carrying books in his hands. But he was slow to understand and without the help of a Japanese translation he was not able to read a single line.25)

“Jun once said: ‘Never before were the Japanese people more miserable than they are today. If the Koreans with Ming soldiers were to console our people and punish the war criminals, and if you were to march on the Japanese islands, announcing through the captured Japanese and interpreters that you were waging the war in order to free the sufferings of the Japanese people, then even Shirakawa Seki, the Eastern edge of the island, would not be too far to take. However, if your soldiers were to repeat the Japanese method of killing and looting, you would not even be able to cross the sea to Tsushima”.

Again, he enquired of me about the civil service examinations, books and authors of our country. Hereupon, I gave him information concerning the civil service examinations and scholars of our country. The monk said with a sigh: It is regrettable that I was born in Japan at this time, instead of being born in either China or Korea. Toward the end of March in the year 1591, I was on board a snip at Satsuma, desiring to go to China. Unfortunately, I was taken ill and returned to the capital. When I recovered, I wanted to go to Korea to continue my studies, but then war broke out between Japan

*25) In Kan Yang Nok this passage is given in smaller type. It is probably meant to be a note or an explanation of the preceding passage*

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and your country. So I was not able to go across the sea to see your great country. And I take it also to be my fate.’

“Again, he said: ‘Japanese generals are all bandits and Hiromichi alone possesses a human heart. While there were originally no rituals in regard to mourning in Japan, Hiromichi alone observed the ritual of three-year mourning. He admired the rites of T’ang and of Korea, and he wanted to imitate their ways of dressing and eating and other details of life. Therefore, although he lives in Japan, he is not a Japanese.’

“Finally, I was led to serve and talk to Hiromichi. Hiromichi told us that he was not on good terms with Kiyomasa (淸正) and Sado (佐渡) and that he would not let Sado know that he had known Korean aristocratic prisoners of war. He hired us to write the Classics in order to help us prepare a fund for our return trip to Korea.26)

He also obtained the book of the Five Ceremonies from our country and he erected a Conf ucian temple. Again, he had Korean mourning costumes and hats made, and ordered his inferiors to learn sacrificial ceremonials.

“On the 9th day of the second moon of this year (1600) Sado, in compliance with the order given by Ieyasu, came to Fushimi. Kim Kyŏng-hang (圣景抗), a Taegu prisoner, knew how to write the Japanese language. So we asked him to write a letter to Sado in Japanese, which read as follows: ‘Ten months of our lives are no benefit to you. Our four years of stay in prison is not equal to death. Perchance, if you do not wish to kill us, we beg that we might be permitted to go out of the gate, otherwise, living is not what we desire.’ Hereupon a Japanese monk, Keian (慶安), strongly advised Sado to let us go free: he said, ‘There is no difference between them and us in a man’s longing for parents and home. Perhaps it would be better for you

26) It is recorded that Kang Hang earned 50 (or 80) silver pieces with which he bought a ship.

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to allow them to go home.’ Hence, Sado immediately set us free. I gathered Koreans together and promised them to take them home if we could collect enough moneys to buy a ship and food supplies. However, they were afraid that some unexpected misfortune might befall us in our attempt to travel a thousand *ri* alone as foreigners in a tiger’s cave. Therefore, I went to Monk Jun and Lord Hiromichi for their help. Hiromichi secured a man who would look after us and show us the sea route to Tsushima.

“Finally, along with ten members of my family and thirty eight others, I got on board a ship on the second day of the fourth moon, and left the Japanese capital. However, the ship was poorly built and the wind was disadvantageous, so we arrived at Pusan on the 9th day of the fifth moon.”27) ‘

It was in the year 1600 that Kang Hang returned home from his unusual experiences to Japan. It has already been stated that upon his return, he resigned his government post ana confined himself to his home in southern Korea, devoting himself to the education of youth. It was due to his genuine patriotic duty to inform his countrymen about the Japanese situation that he wrote his travelogue, *Kan Yang Nok*, which includes a memorial to the Korean king to the effect that the Japanese were not in a position to re-attack Korea. It may be added that his prediction was a correct one for at least another three centuries.

All in all, our main interest lies in the fact that Kang Hang made a great impression upon Fujiwara Seika in the process of establishing himself as the founder of the Kyo Gaku, in spite of his uncomfortable status. In doing so, Kang Hang introduced T’oegye philosophy to the Japanese, which played an important role in the history of Japanese Confucianism. Thus, the transmission of Neo-confucianism to Japan was carried out as a by-

27) *Kan Yang Nok*, pp. 62-64.

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product of the unprovoked Hideyoshi Invasion. It may be concluded that the power of ideas and philosophies finds mysterious and unpredictable ways to spread its life beyond national boundaries.