Acceptance and Influence of Toegye’s Philosophy in the Kumamoto Jitsugaku School: The Search of a Korean-Japanese Relationship from the Position of Toegye’s Philosophy*

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Abstract

This manuscript reexamines how the Kumamoto 熊本 Jitsugaku 實學 (kor. Silhak, Realist School of Confucianism) School embraced Toegye’s philosophy. For this purpose it focuses on the thoughts of Ōtsuka Taiya 大塚退野 (1678-1750), precursor of this school, who in the Japanese history of thought was the person presumably most fascinated with the philosophy and personality of Yi Toegye 李退溪 (1501-1570), adds the related commentaries of Yokoi Shōnan 橫井小楠 (1809-1869) and Motoda

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Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818-1891), which later inherited Taiya’s philosophy, and thus subsequently tries
find to a desirable blueprint for the future Korean-Japanese relations.

In the history of thought in East Asian between the 17th and the 18th century, Taiya chose the orthodox
Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi and Toegye from the spectrum of the various ideas in the Edo period
history of thoughts and became deeply absorbed in it, which later when scholars from the same region
who succeeded him sought the foundation for a new philosophy they called Jitsugaku 實學 constituted
one important axis among the ideas in the reformation period towards the end of the Tokugawa
shogunate 幕末維新期. To verify that the main source of contact with and influence from Toegye’s
philosophy for the scholars of the Kumamoto Jitsugaku School came from the “study of the mind”
(kor. Simhak 心學 or Simsulgongbu 心術工夫), in this manuscript we will examine commentaries
that these scholars beginning with Taiya made on Yi Toegye as well as the critical statements about
Ogyū Sorai 萩生徂徠 (1666-1728) and Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1619-1682). The criticism of Sorai
and Ansai also bears the functional significance to highlight the ideological peculiarities and position
of Toegye and the Kumamoto Jitsugaku School in the Japanese history of thought. In conclusion,
this links the importance that is attached to the “study of the mind” to the “discourse on the unity
of heaven and man 天人合一論”, and points out that the desirable blueprint of the future between
Korea and Japan, which Toegye and the scholars of Kumamoto Jitsugaku School that succeeded him
were implying, could be created when approaching other states with the extended line of thoughts
from a policy of genuine “benevolence 仁” that cares for the real life of the citizens and not with
a “truthful mind”, the “principle of benevolence and righteousness of heaven and earth 天地仁義の大道”
or the fictitious honor of the “state” and rivalry.

Key Words: Yi Toegye, Kumamoto Jitsugaku, Silhak, Ōtsuka Taiya, Yokoi Shōnan, Motoda
Nagazane, Study of the Mind, Simsul Gongbu

1. Introduction

This manuscript reexamines how the Kumamoto 熊本 Jitsugaku 實學 (kor. Silhak,
Realist School of Confucianism) School1) embraced Toegye’s philosophy. For this
purpose it focuses on the thoughts of Ōtsuka Taiya 大塚退野 (1678-1750), precursor
of this school, who in the Japanese history of thought was the person presumably most

1) Abe, Yoshio (阿部吉雄), Nihon Shushigaku To Chosen (日本朱子學と朝鮮). Tokyo: Publishers Association of Tokyo
University, 1965: 472. Abe says about the relationship between the Kumamoto Jitsugaku school and Toegye: “The
Neo-Confucianism of the Sakimon school 崎門派 and the Neo-Confucianist school of 同調共趣 appeared in Kumamoto
in Kyōshū. Ōtsuka Taiya succeeded Yabu Shin’an 藪愼庵 and Yabu Kozan 藪孤山 and inspired a number of important
persons such as Yokoi Shōnan 橫井小楠 and Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 etc., in the period at the end of
the Tokugawa shogunate 幕末維新期. This is called the Kumamoto Jitsugaku school. […] The form in which the people
of this school respected and trusted Yi Toegye was the most ideal in the school of Satō Naokata 佐藤直方.”
fascinated with the philosophy and personality of Yi Toegye 李退溪 (1501-1570), adds the related commentaries of Yokoi Shōnan 橫井小楠 (1809-1869) and Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818-1891), which later inherited Taiya’s philosophy, and thus subsequently tries to find to a desirable blueprint for the future Korean-Japanese relations.

The important “Higo Sentetsu Iseki 肥後先哲偉蹟 (Great Achievements of the Sages from later Kumamoto)”, a sort of Gakuan 學案 that records the lives and philosophical thoughts of the scholars, records on Ōtsuka Taiya: “His name is Hisanari 久成, commonly known as Tansa Emon 丹左衛門, his first pen name was Kensai 蹟齋, later changed his pen name into Fusai 孝齋, and after resigning his office he called himself Taiya 退野. He received a hereditary stipend 世祿 of 200 koku 石 (around 180 liters) of rice, held the post of Banshi Kumiwaki 番士組脇 and died on March 5th, 1750 (Kan’en 寛延 era year 3) at the age of 74 years.”

When discussing Taiya’s philosophy at present the essential materials one will frequently have to utilize are “Recorded Utterances of Ōtsuka Taiya 大塚退野先生語錄 (Ōtsuka Taiya Sensei Goroku)” (manuscript) and “Higo Bunken Sōsho 肥後文献叢書” (volume 4), which includes “Fusai Sonkō 孝齋存稿”, both written by his disciple Mori Shōsai 森省齋 (1714-1774). The latter “Fusai Sonkō” receive its original form around 100 years after Taiya’s death in a short time from the materials that Shōnan, Motoda and other members of the Jitsugaku School compiled from before and after the “Study Assembly 講學會”. In Motoda’s “Kanreki no Ki 還曆之記” it is said that his diligence in the

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3) Kōzuma, Hiroyuki (上妻博之), Higo Bunken Kaidai—Shinte (肥後文獻解題—新訂). Kumamoto: Jobundo Kawashima Shoten, 1988 (first published 1956): 179. Kōzuma says here: “The record comprises 70 items, we can know Taiya’s thoughts through the overall changes of Taiya’s philosophy, the commentaries of various scholars, the Xiuyanglun 修養論 and further content.” For the citations in this paper the Kyūshū University Book Collection 九州大學所蔵本 was used. It is made up of the commentaries of 96 articles.

4) Mutō, Izuo (武藤嚴男), Tofu Uno (宇野東風), and Sadayoshi Kojo (古城貞吉) (eds.), Higo Bunken Sōho (肥後文献叢書), no.4. Kyōto: Ryōbunkan, 1910.

5) Ibid., preface 2. In Kōzuma’s “Higo Bunken Kaidai—Shinte” (p. 237) it is introduced too: “gathered and compiled during the Tempō 天保 (1831-1845) and Kaei 嘉永 (1848-1855) period by Yoneda 米田, Yokoi 橫井, Ogi 萩, Motoda 元田 and many other predecessors”. The “Study Assembly” was probably launched from 1841, after Shōnan, who made a mistake while intoxicated during a study visit in Edo, consequently was sent back to Kumamoto to receive his punishment after a period of 70 days in December 1840 (Tempō 天保 year 11).
pursuit of studying Jitsugaku delighted his grandfather and that he helped with the arrangement of posthumous works such as “Fusai Sonkō” and others that had not been transcribed before. Although the former “Taiya Goroku” is composed of 98 paragraphs and the latter “Fusai Sonkō” on the whole comprises 3 volumes with addenda, if we compare these works for instance with the anthologies of Ansai, Sorai and others, who are criticized in Taiya’s own writings, this is actually not much.

The reason I deliberately mention similar cases here is that I want to point out that when Taiya, as a regional Confucian scholar almost unknown in the Japanese history of thought (more precisely, the history of Confucianism during the Edo period) due to the rediscovery and appreciation by Shōnan, Motoda, and others, came to receive virtually nationwide attention, it was more than anything else due to Taiya’s devotion to Toegye’s philosophy. In the history of East Asian thought in the 17th and 18th centuries, Taiya chose the orthodox Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi and Toegye from the spectrum of the various ideas in the Edo period history of thoughts and became deeply absorbed in it, which later, when scholars from the same region who succeeded him sought the foundation for a new philosophy, they said Jitsugaku constituted one important axis among the ideas in the reformation period towards the end of the Tokugawa shogunate.

In this paper I want to review in which aspects Taiya and his successors identified with Toegye, which significance this holds for the Japanese history of thought, and that way try to think about which suggestions could be made for the establishment of the Korean-Japanese relationship. First, before we start to discuss Taiya, we have to examine the influence of Toegye’s philosophy in Japan and the meaning it carries and, moreover, how we have to look at the debate surrounding the “Imperial Rescript on Education” 7), which was drafted by Motoda Nagazane.

7) It was promulgated in 1890 and abolished in 1948.
2. A Perspective on the Influence of Toegye’s Philosophy: Motoda Nagazane’s “Imperial Rescript on Education”

When it comes to the influence of Yi Toegye on the Kumamoto Jitsugaku school, one typical statement that often gets mentioned are the words of Matsuda Kō 松田甲 (1864-1945), who was a commissary of the designated Japanese Government-General of Korea, that will be introduced below. Here Matsuda quotes from the speech of Motoda Nagazane, who was royal tutor 侍講 to the Meiji 明治 emperor, at the time when he was “giving a lecture in Royal presence at the imperial court”.

The philosophy of Cheng and Zhu 程朱 (Cheng Hao 程顥, his brother Cheng Yi 程頤 and Zhu Xi 朱熹) has been passed down to Yi Toegye from Korea; Mister Taiya read the book “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi 朱子書節要”, which Toegye compiled, and grasped it in an aloof way. Now I (Motoda) will convey Taiya’s philosophy to Your Majesty (the Meiji emperor).8)

Following these words by Motoda, Matsuda adds his own assessment: “What Toegye with the ‘Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi’, which he compiled, together with his ‘Personal Reflections 自省錄’ contributed to the Japan’s education is really immense.” These words have been taken from the text “Personal Reflections and Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi 自省錄と朱子書節要” which had been compiled together with 5 other treatises related to Yi Toegye in the 6th volume of the “Historical Narrative of Japan and Korea (as one) 日鮮史話”, published in 1930 (Shōwa 昭和 era year 6), and Matsuda revealed his feelings about

this year of the publication: “Because this year correlates with six sexagenary cycles that have passed since the year (Kōgo no nen 庚午の年) of Toegye’s death and, thus, exactly 360 years have elapsed, a very special opportunity to commemorate and honor him presents itself.” How much Matsuda personally admired Toegye is the aspect from which we can get a sense of how much the influence of Toegye’s philosophy was appreciated by the Japanese (thoughts).

The key issue here is, at what goal this kind of devotion to Toegye and acknowledgement of his influence was aiming eventually. In the end of the above mentioned “Personal Reflections and Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi”, which introduces the words of Motoda, Matsuda states that even though there are many people who are aware that the “Imperial Rescript on Education” was drafted by Motoda on demand of the Meiji emperor, “there is, however, almost no one who knows that Tōya 東野 (Motoda’s pen name) venerated Yi Toegye’s philosophy. As a matter of fact, I wish this would be widely known in the world. In particular if Koreans and the Japanese living in Korea would take note of this, I think this would become very helpful as material for reconciliation 融和資料”9), and he expected his own research and publications on Toegye and Toegye’s philosophy to be used as “conciliatory material”. In other words, there was no difference between this “material for reconciliation” of which Matsuda spoke and those materials that argued the continuation of the colonial rule.

As a Japanese citizen Tōya 東野 has great merit for establishing the “Imperial Rescript on Education” that we will always keep in mind. And when we understand the way this theory is connecting Zhu Xi, Yi Toegye, Ōtsuka Taiya and Motoda Tōya, it is impossible that this wouldn’t have an influence on the thoughts about the greatness of the relationship between Japan and Korea 内鮮. Needless to mention that the “Imperial Rescript on Education” is hanging in every school in Japan and Korea. Tōya, who has drafted it, was a worshipper of Toegye, and

perhaps while reading reverentially of Toegye who was said to be the leading authority 泰斗 of Confucianism, which was venerated by the Korean people, the heart of the Meiji Emperor was deeply moved by the reminiscence. For the sake of the integration of Japan and Korea 内鮮同和 or the reconciliation of Japan and Korea 内鮮融和 I think their (Toegye and Motoda’s) relationship should be well researched or be continued to be researched.10)

What’s underlying the glorification of Toegye and the goal to research his relation to Motoda tells us about the existence of a plan for a colonial policy of a permanent “integration and reconciliation of Japan and Korea”. From the Korean point of view, to be proud of the influence that Toegye had on Japanese thought is something that is impossible to even think of.

Even for the Japanese, the involvement of Motoda, who was a Confucian (a scholar of Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism) that was connected with the school system of Zhu Xi and Yi Toegye, in the “Imperial Rescript on Education” entails a complicated status. Although affirmative assessments like “the ‘Imperial Rescript of Education’, which gave birth to the noble spirit and conduct of the Japanese”11) exist on the one side, a deeply rooted sense of incompatibility undoubtedly coexists. The opinion of the Japanese administration, that the “Imperial Rescript on Education” could be used as teaching material for moral education in schools, against which the Society for the History of Education 敎育史學會 issued a declaration of objection, may be given as an example from recent days (in 2017). “Although the utilization of the ‘Imperial Rescript on Education’ as a material to critically cognize historical facts will be necessary, its use as a teaching material for the moral education of the students goes against the constitution of the Japanese state and the Basic Education Law, which are based on the principle of the sovereignty of the people”, so the purpose of the declaration of objection. While the statement shows three specific sorts of

10) Ibid.: 47.
harmful effects, its root cause stems from the point that “all of the virtues described in the ‘Imperial Rescript on Education’ had to converge in a pledge of allegiance to (support and protect 扶翼) the fate of the emperor 皇運, as eternal as Heaven and Earth 天壤無窮.”

If we recall that Motoda is a Confucian scholar, eventually the harmful consequences of the “Imperial Rescript”, which Motoda referred to, can be found in the Confucian ideas that took hold in the “Interpretation of the Benevolent Imperial Rule 皇道ノ訓解” and the “Explanatory Notes to the Benevolent Imperial Rule 皇道ノ註释”, through integration of Confucianism and the “Doctrine of the Benevolent Emperor 皇道主義” or in the subordination of Confucianism under the “Doctrine of the Benevolent Emperor”. The “Imperial Rescript”, through a Confucianism that was reinterpreted under the “Doctrine of the Benevolent Emperor”, became “a code of morals 綱常 that all subjects must rely on as the dominant principle of national education”, something against which opposition shows up even to the present day.

Although Toegye certainly doesn’t bear any responsibility for this (Confucianism

12) The Japan Society for Historical Studies of Education (敎育史學會), Kyōkushigakukai “Kyōkushin ni kansuru Chokugo” (Kyōkashu Chokogo) no Kyōsha Shīyō ni kansuru Seimei ni tsute (敎育史學會, 敎育勅語ニ關スル勅語ノ教科使用ニ關スル聲明ニついて). http://kyouikushigakukai.jp/info/2017/0508115621 (accessed May 8, 2017). About the three sorts of harmful facts, the declaration points out that there is the aspect that the “Imperial Rescript on Education” acted as the primary method of ruling the people through the emperor, the aspect that it became deified itself and lead to irrationality and tragedy in the schools, and the aspect of the implementation of the colonial rule in Joseon and Taiwan on the basis of a sense of national superiority.

13) Inoue Kowashi 井上毅 (1843-1895), who obtained Motoda’s professional advice, arranged the final blueprint as well as polished up the philosophy of Yokoi Shōnan and Motoda, was also equipped with Confucian knowledge through his affiliation with other boarding students of the Kumamoto Hankō Jishūkan 熊本藩校時習館.


16) While the pedagogist Yamazumi Masami 山住正己 wrote about the relation between the “Imperial Rescript on Education” and Confucianism that “in Japan of the 19th century the policy of everyday moral education could not be found outside of Confucianism. Hence the part of the five cardinal Confucian relationships 五倫 was slightly adjusted and listed as moral principles in the Imperial Rescript on Education”, he asserted that “in case a national emergency happened the overall constitution of the Rescript demands the dedication of everyone’s life for the state and everyday morality too does not exist outside the cause to accomplish this ultimate purpose. Confucianism will also be completely utilized.” (Yamazumi, Masami (山住正己). Kyōkuchigakukai (敎育勅語). Asahi Sensho 154. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1980: 130)

reinterpreted to suit the “Doctrine of the Benevolent Emperor”), the problem here is that this criticism is even affecting Zhu Xi’s philosophy. The progressive educator Yamazumi Masami 亀住正己 passes pungent criticism on this as follows.

The thoughts of these pioneers didn’t become the focus of attention of the politicians who aimed to establish an “education system” in the latter half of the 19th century at the beginning of the second decade of the Meiji period. No, they didn’t turn their eyes to it. The thoughts of the people who drew up and issued the “Imperial Rescript on Education” were the complete opposite of these of the outstanding Confucians like Jinsai 仁齋 or Sorai 徒勒 and other scholars of the Tokugawa 徳川 period, and this was unfortunate for Japan’s education.18)

It doesn’t have to be mentioned again explicitly that the philosophy of Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627-1705) and Ogyū Sorai 萩生徂徕 (1666-1728), the above mentioned “outstanding Confucian scholars” of the Tokugawa period, who are contrasted with the drafter of the “Imperial Rescript” (Motoda), is argued here to be an antithesis to Zhu Xi’s philosophy. The “complete opposites” that Yamazumi spoke about are the “tolerationism” of Jinsai and Sorai that faces the ethical “rigorism” of the Neo-Confucians19) in accordance with Zhu Xi, more specifically the conflict between the two positions concerning the interpretation of shuàixìng 率性 (one’s natural disposition) and xìngshàn 性善 (virtuous nature). Yamazumi contrasted the two positions – the Neo-Confucianist Motoda, who believed in the universality of xìngshàn and therefore insisted on the necessity to follow one’s nature 性 and Jinsai and Sorai who considered the nature of man as something individual and limited – through the debate that emphasized the importance of acquired learning.20) He passes

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19) Ibid.: 512.
judgement on the conservative scholars (= Neo-Confucianists) who emphasize the
cultivation of morality by quoting in particular the last paragraph in Sorai’s
“Regulations for Study 學則”: “In learning, even if I may become a follower of
all kind of philosophies (of the late Zhou era) or a scholar of insignificant skills,
I don’t wish to become a teacher of conservative Confucian ethics 道學先生.” 21) Here Yamazumi considers the fact that the “Imperial Rescript on Education” was
written by the Neo-Confucian Motoda as “unfortunate for Japan’s education”.
Although Yi Toegye doesn’t appear in Yamazumi’s text, with such a tone of an
argument a friendly appraisal of Toegye surely could not be expected, and a positive
exploration of the Korean-Japanese relationship through Toegye’s philosophy would
mean nothing but difficulties.

However, linking the emphasis on morality of Zhu Xi’s philosophy or the ubiquitous
xìngshàn concept through the dictum “human nature equals principle 性即理” directly
to the so-called totalitarian “theory of nation state 國體論” of later days would be
an unreasonable debate. After the release of the “Imperial Rescript” Yamazumi might
have considered the historical harmful consequences in the same way as the
aforementioned Society for the History of Education had pointed it out and expressed
goodwill towards the thoughts of Jinsai and Sorai, who criticized Zhu Xi’s
Neo-Confucianism and considered individuality as more important than universality,
but although the people who drew up the “Imperial Rescript” eventually had this
harmful effect, it was certainly not their original intention. Watsuji Tetsurō’s 和辻哲郎
(1889–1960) defensive assessment can be understood as a reflection of the situation:
“If someone says that the ‘Imperial Rescript on Education’ represents the ethical thoughts
of the Meiji dynasty, then aren’t these features called proper morals at all times and
places, and not emphasizing worship of the emperor or to be loyal and filial, etc. This
can be clear if one calmly contemplates the content of this imperial edict.” 22)

All three scholars of the Kumamoto Jitsugaku School who are examined in this

21) Ogyū Sorai (荻生徂徠), Gaku-Soku(學則) paragraph 7: 258. “學寧為諸子百家曲藝之士，而不願為道學先生”
study have the common ground that they are criticizing Sorai. I will get back to it in the main section, but the point of their overall criticism is that they regarded the system of “rites and music, punishment and laws”（禮樂刑政）as important, which Sorai considered as being contrived by the sages, all the while he treated morality or the “inner mind” （心）lightly. In the words of Shōnan, Sorai only focused on “the technique 術 of Western instruments 西洋器械” (i.e. cultural products and institutions), for which his disregard of “the morality of Yao, Shun and Confucius” became the basis. The main source of contact with and influence from Toegye’s philosophy on the Kumamoto Jitsugaku school can primarily be found here (the key points of Confucianism are conveyed as 道, but not as technique), and to dare a little leap—if these arguments would have been more historically powerful—a different image of a Korean-Japanese relationship that was not a relationship of imperial colonial domination and subjugation could have been envisioned at the starting point of the modern era.

3. Rearrangement of Ōtsuka Taiya’s Reception of Toegye’s Philosophy

Although the form of Taiya’s admiration for Toegye’s philosophy has already been mentioned in the studies of the previously cited Matsuda, Abe, and others,

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23) The original text “Revealing the way of Yao, Shun, Confucius and Mencius, by Means the Techniques of the Western World” (堯舜孔子の道を明らかにし、西洋器械の術を盡さば) in Yamazaki, Masatada (山崎正正), Yokoi Shōnan Denkihen (横井小楠傳記篇). Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1938: 903 conveys the meaning to pursue the strengths of East and West together. About this Matsūra Rei (松浦理) claims that Shōnan's emphasis lies on the way of the ancient Yao, Shun, Confucius and Mencius. Sakuma, Shōzan (佐久間象山), and Shōnan Yokoi (横井小楠). “Risō No Yukue—Shisō Wa Sēji To Nariurunoka” (理想のゆくえ—思想は政治となりうるのか). In: Nihon No Mēcho (日本の名著) 30 [30 Masterpieces of Japan], edited by Rē Matsuura (松浦玲) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha (中央公論社)), 1970), 5-85.

24) Kusumoto Masatsugu (楠本正繼), “Ōtsuka Taiya Narabini Sono Gakuha No Shiso—Kumamoto Jitsugaku Shiso No Kenkyu” (大塚退野竝に其學派の思想—熊本實學思想の研究). In: Kyushu Jugaku Shiso No Kenkyu (九州儒學思想の硏究), edited by Masatsugu Kusumoto, publisher unclear, 1957: 1-34. At the same he time while he presents the influence of Toegye’s philosophy, he conducts a serious analytical study of the peculiarities of the thoughts of Taiya (and his followers). In this paper Taiya had read the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi 朱子書節要” and he introduces the content of his notebook, which he filled throughout with his opinions. Currently Taiya’s Notebook on “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” (退野手批本 朱子書節要) is included in Abe, Yoshio (阿部雄雄) (ed). Ilbon Gakpan Yitoegye Jeonjip SangHa (日本刻版李退溪全集) (下),
we will once more follow up origins and developments, while we’ll try to organize the important points below.

① The teacher (Taiya) said: From the age of 28 years on I committed myself to the study of Cheng and Zhu. Prior to that it seemed I would see with intuitive knowledge 良知, because I believed in the philosophy of Yangming 陽明. Nevertheless, when I compared the meanings of the scriptures bequeathed to us by the sages, I had secret doubts. And then while I was reading the “Personal Reflections” I became aware of the philosophy of Cheng and Zhu.25

② When I read the “Personal Reflections” again after a long time, I more and more began to ponder over the unfathomable infinitude of Toegye’s philosophy. Without this man (Toegye) I wouldn’t have known the cryptic meanings of Ziyang 紫陽 (another name of Zhu Xi) nor have escaped the secular studies.26

③ About the aforementioned text, in my youth I took root in Toegye’s words and perused the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” and because I inwardly got that Zhu Xi’s words were the same, I wrote it down. I constantly have my mind fixed on that book, because I believe and trust in it and now I am engaged in this philosophy already for more than 40 years, even if it is impossible to know all of its meanings I would not turn to another place and plan to pursue it till the end of my days.27

④ Scholarship is divided into all kinds of branches, and therefore it is easy for the younger students to lose the way they should follow, which is a regrettable

27) Ibid., “送克齋渡瀨秀才遊學於京師序”: 607. “右一篇，余壯歲，本於退溪先生之言，熟讀朱子書簡要，密窺得朱夫子之所為如是者而記之，終藏之胸臆，信而從事於斯，幾四十年，雖知未有所得，不復他求，將終此生”
matter. In my (Taiya’s) case, the best method not to lose my way was to read the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi”. Because this book is filled with all the concerns of Toegye, who worried about the situation of the academic division, it is worthy of trust and respect.\(^{28}\)

5 Although the philosophy of Zhu Xi circulated in Japan already for a long time, since our Kumamoto daimyō is located afar next to the Western ocean, there was no outstanding scholar (left). Ōtsuka appeared and ascended vigorously and for the first time concentrated all his strength on the studies of Zhu Xi. At this time, he found and read “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” that Yi Toegye had compiled in Joseon, and in exalted morale he got things in his mind and rejoiced: “This in particular would be something to win Zhu Xi’s heart; I trusted and respected this book the same as the gods 神明.” His late father Yabu Shin’an 藪慎庵, who also was vivified by this, respected Ōtsuka like an older brother and thanks to having the same mind they developed this philosophy a lot and thus did a favor to our younger generation. The philosophy of these two men has its roots in Zhu Xi, the things it received from Yi Toegye are many. Ōtsuka said here: “Not even Huang Mianzhai’s 黃勉齋 ‘Brief Obituary for Zhu Xi 朱子行狀’ can hold a candle to Toegye’s ‘Outline and Explanations’.” And his father added: “The person who directly continued the academic line of Ziyang (Zhu Xi) is Toegye.” That these two people praise Toegye in such a way is certainly due to something they became aware of.\(^{29}\)

6 The studies of Yi Toegye are deep and meticulous, since he has discovered

\(^{28}\) Ibid., “答中村感齋”：661. “學術分多端, 後學遂從事, 實可嘆. 在己欲不差, 則莫若讀朱子書節要. 此故退溪先生憂學之志, 全在於此, 可信可敬”

and acquired even the secret meanings that Zhu Xi himself didn’t reveal, and is indeed very accurate and circumstantial. \(^{30)}\)

1) and 2) refer to the “Personal Reflections”, and 3) to 6) are remarks related to the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi”. 1) lets us know about the circumstances of his academic turning point in relation to the “Personal Reflections”, which he acquired with 28 years and which changed him from being a former follower of Wang Yangming’s philosophy to come to Zhu Xi’s philosophy. In 2) we can get a sense of how owing to the “Personal Reflections” he got to know the quintessence of Zhu Xi’s philosophy, as well as of the circumstance of his reference for Toegye’s meaning of which he said it didn’t fall into secular studies.

In 3) Taiya reveals how he due to being guided by “Personal Reflections” came into contact with the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi”, which allowed him to engage in orthodox Neo-Confucian studies instead of secular studies for more than 40 years of his academic life. When Taiya refers to “the aforementioned text”, he is speaking about the essence of Zhu Xi’s philosophy, which he understood through the “Outline and Explanations”\(^{31)}\), and his learning methods. To quote the central part:

Zhu Xi’s philosophy originally aimed at seeking benevolence and to return to nature 求仁復性 and from the beginning didn’t concern itself with the glory and disgrace, joys and worries 興衰休戚 of society. To go further, it desires to be shared together with future generations of the world and does not wish just to be focused alone on oneself. Hence keep the maxims of the great thinkers of the past in mind, revere the examples given by the former masters and put all the hundred sorts of it into practice, but you still cannot be certain that you know about it. So put all your

\(^{30)}\) Abe, Ilbon Gakpan Yitoegye Jeonjip Sang·Ha: 157. “李退溪工夫深密，發得文公之余意，極精詳”

\(^{31)}\) Kusumoto Masatsugu 楠本正繼 assumes that the year in which Taiya began to research the “Outline and Explanations” was Hoei (寶永) era year 2 (1705), when he was ca. 29 years (see paper above), based on Taiya, who writes in “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” (朱子書節要) vol. 3, ch. “Answering Zhang Jingfu 答張敬夫”：“昔年期右之疑，今又反覆熟讀，始知李公節要之有深意。寶永二乙酉年仲春” (Abe, Ilbon Gakpan Yitoegye Jeonjip Sang·Ha: 56).
energy on the distinguishable facts 分殊之實, do not think rashly about the origins of urgent matters 理一之極, and if you get an inch 一寸 then guard this inch, if you get a foot 一尺 then guard this foot, all the traces of the knowledge and practices of the past are not acknowledged in the mind 靈臺. […] If this is based on gyeyong 敬 (reverence) and does neither rest nor cease even for a while, you will become acquainted with righteousness義 and become familiar with benevolence仁.32)

For scholars who follow the orthodox Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi and Toegye it is a natural stance to place the foundation of their philosophy in “seeking benevolence and returning to nature” and to achieve it through self-cultivation of the mind and reverence 敬. However, in the Japanese history of ideas, especially in the academic world after the philosophy of Sorai, a perspective like Taiya’s, which puts emphasis on universality of nature or the self-cultivation of the mind, was rather a minority opinion. Considering this situation, the significance of the rise of the traditional Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi through the philosophy of Toegye is considerable.33) As I will examine it again below, the criticism of Taiya or Yokoi Shōnan for Ansai of the same Neo-Conufucian school is also related to this. If we try to pay attention once more to the text above, the verbalizations of Taiya “didn’t concern itself with the glory and disgrace, joys and worries 榮悴休戚”, “all the traces of the knowledge and practices of the past are not acknowledged in the mind 靈臺” and others resemble the well known following quote from the “Personal Reflections” which Shōnan cited directly and gave to his disciples as means of encouragement:

“First of all, we should leave the whole of failure and success, gains and losses 窮通得失, glory and disgrace, joys and worries 榮悴休戚 in the world out of our


33) As an example, Minamoto Ryōen writes: “After Sorai 後來 the atmosphere in the world of thought changed thoroughly. Before him the world of the Confucians was internal and driven by the search for enlightenment, whereas the intellectual interest of thinkers after Sorai 濱學者 and Japan philologists 國學者 were too included – changed towards the outer world and their attitude towards the human life became something centrifugal.” (Minamoto, Ryōen 道元, Tokugawa Gōri Shisō No Kōfu (德川合理思想の系譜). Tokyo: Chuō Kōronsha, 1972: 156)
consideration and have to make sure none of them are in the mind. This too can be seen as one evidence that speaks of Toegye’s influence.

④ is a paragraph of Taiya’s corrections and answers to all kind of scientific questions sent to him by a follower named Nakamura Kansai 中村感齋 (biographical details ambiguous). The purpose of Nakamura’s questions is “speaking of the fundamental principles of studying I think Zhu Xi’s teachings about the observation of phenomena of nature and moral integrity 格物居敬 have become the essential thing, but there are difficulties especially because every school has its own stance about the study of things and nature”35), to what Taiya replied that Toegye was also concerned about such a division and emphasized the importance of the “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi“.

Number ⑤ is from a text by Yabu Kozan 藪孤山 (1735-1802) who served successfully as the second generation professor 學頭 of the Kumamoto daimyate school 藪校時習館 and which can be found in the “Kozan Igō 孤山遺稿”. Taiya appraised Toegye’s “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” even higher than Huang Mianzhai’s 黃勉齋 (= Huang Gan 黃幹) “Brief Obituary of Master Zhu 朱子行狀”, as Toegye is treating the “Annotations on the Scripture of the Heart 心經附註”36) like a god, so Taiya too presents us the words that he “venerates the ‘Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi’ like a god’. Although there was a close friendship between Yabu Kozan’s predecessor Yabu Shin’an 藪慎庵 (1689-1744) and Sorai due to the former’s acquaintance with Taiya, he questioned Sorai’s studies, eventually broke with it, and revered Zhu Xi’s philosophy37). Kozan said that his predecessor Shinan succeeded Ansai in Japan directly from Toegye, as explicated below: “Confucius’s way of teaching was passed to Zengzi 曾子 and

Zisi 子思 and then further to Mencius. After Mencius’ death this transmission was cut off for a long time, but after the two teachers Cheng and Zhu Xi 程朱二子 of the Song dynasty came and started deep research there was at last something to gain from it. This philosophy again was handed on to Yi Toegye in Korea, and from Toegye it was passed down to Yamazaki Ansai in Japan, and through Ansai conveyed to my predecessor Shin’an.” 38) Leaving the relational circumstances of the transmission aside, these are clearly informative words on how the presence of Yi Toegye came to pass in the early Kumamoto Jitsugaku School around Taiya.

Number ⑥ is Taiya’s handwritten notice 手批 of personal appreciation from “Outline and Explanations of the Works of Zhu Xi” volume 8, where he discusses in the chapter “Answer to He Shujing 答何叔京” the relation between gyeong 敬 (respect) and jeong 静 (contemplation). The content of Zhu Xi’s answer is that while one has to give first consideration to gyeong 敬 (respect) and the habitual preservation of the original mind 必有事焉, there has to be made an effort together with the jeong 静 (contemplation) that has not yet invoked intentional action 思慮作爲 39), about which Toegye quotes Chengzi 程子: “If we talk just a bit about jeong 静 (contemplation), we fall directly into Buddhist theory. We shouldn’t write jeong 静 (contemplative) texts; we just have to write gyeong 敬 (respectful) texts instead. Even if we just speak a little about jeong 静 within moments this will be forgotten.”

As well as Mencius 2A:6 chapter “Gongsunchou, part one 公孫丑上”: “We must be sure to not habitually anticipate the future and to not let it slip our mind and to not encourage it” and other phrases, while seeking Zhu Xi’s real intention more than twice as thorough than Zhu Xi’s text. Toegye affirms: “Although He Shujing was in accordance with the above-mentioned words of Chengzi and showed doubts in Zhu Xi, this became the wrong idea that Chengzi would have said ‘don’t employ jeong 静 (contemplation)’, which ordinary scholars misunderstood and worried to

yield to *chan* (meditation, Chan-Buddhism), *jing* cannot be eliminated from preserving the original mind and concludes “Zhu Xi’s answer is clear and without room for doubt.” Taiya’s personal notice shows such admiration for Toegye’s meticulous attitude in pursuit of learning.

Above, we have examined 6 passages in which Taiya is expressing his veneration for Toegye while taking their context into consideration. If we in addition once more try to pay attention to the above-mentioned point “Answer to Nakamura Kansai 答中村感齋”, we can find the following words.

(Nakamura’s question) The study of the mind simply does not put anything in the mind, and I think Toegye’s study of the mind here is not far from it. Because the other remaining flaws and shortcomings follow an innate disposition, it seems there is nothing to be done in a hurry. It is only here that we make an effort in the study of *zhizhi* (acquire knowledge of the nature of things), and it seems that there is no other way but to minutely understand the stage where heaven and man are the same 天人一致. How about this?

(Taiya’s comment) This is a very good thought. 41)

Although it didn’t receive much attention at that time because Taiya’s only remark to Nakamura’s question was a simple “very good”, I think this question and answer carries an important clue when examining the philosophical peculiarities of Taiya and their school. Before everything else, Nakamura directly makes a connection to Toegye, and there is the mentioned “study of the mind”, the emphasis on “zhizhi 致知”, as well as the view of “heaven and man as the same 天人一致”. In this article I will focus especially on the “study of the mind” and the “theory of unity between heaven and man 天人無間論”, which have a relation with the subject, and try to proceed with the argument. 42)

40) Ibid.: 157-158. The core of the quote can be expressed: “（程子曰）纔說靜便入於釋氏之說也。不用靜字，只用敬字。纔說著靜便是忘也 孟子曰必有事焉而勿正心勿忘勿助長……叔京因程子此語而有疑問於先生，其說不可考。今以已意代說云，程子不用靜字，只慮學者之誤入靜去耳，靜不可廢也。……看先生答辭，可嘖然無疑矣”

41) Mutō et al., *Higo Bunken Sōsho* no.4, "答中村感齋": 661.
4. The Acceptance of Toegye’s Philosophy in the Jitsugaku School of Kumamoto: “Study of the Mind” and Critical Perspectives in the History of Edo-Confucianism

1) Critique of Ogyū Sorai

While Nakamura discusses Toegye’s study of the mind, he derives from here the concept of heaven and man as the same, and Taiya’s unconditional approval for this can be seen in the commentary related to ④ (the pursuit of benevolence and return to nature based on the study of the mind) too, which shows that they were seeking the origin of Toegye’s philosophy and proceeding with the foundation of Confucianism in the so-called study of the mind 心學. It is no exaggeration to say that the “Personal Reflections 自省錄”, which Taiya and his pupils without a doubt have read, was composed of key topics of the study of the mind 心術 on how to control “the disease of the perception 心氣之患” ④3) and “the anomaly of the mind 心恙” ④4) according to Toegye. The phrase “the study of the mind simply does not put anything in the mind” may have been articulated according to their understanding of Toegye’s phrasing about “the disease of the perception 心氣之患” and “the anomaly of the mind 心恙”. Thus influenced by Toegye’s philosophy, Taiya and his pupils regarded and studied the study of the mind 心學 as the root of Confucianism (Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism).

However, the above-mentioned opinion that the foundation of Confucianism would

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42) In Taiya’s school, the importance attached to the process to acquire knowledge about the nature of things致知 is connected with is the criticism of Wang Yangming’s philosophy. Taiya wrote about “the unity of knowledge and practice 知行合” of Wang Yangming’s philosophy: “If knowledge and practice progress simultaneous 知行兼進 the highest virtue 明德 must be restored to its original form 本然.” (Ibid., “體驗說”: 611) Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608-1648), a Japanese scholar of Wang Yangming’s philosophy, criticizes: “Because he could not see the true reason 理 behind the essential persistent study of the nature of things 格致一貫 of the essence his mind was prejudiced and he didn’t reach the wide erudition and methodical persistence 博約 of the saints. The method of study too is not just precarious, it also is close to Buddhism” (Ibid., “藤樹學意辨”: 613) etc. and lays stress on the pursuit of knowledge according to Zhu Xi’s philosophy.

44) Ibid., ch. ‘答鄭子中’: 332.
lie in the study of the mind was in the Japanese history of thoughts, or at least in the in the Kumamoto daimyate 熊本藩 of the Edo period when Taiya lived, a minority opinion. Below we have Taiya’s description of the academic situation of the Kumamoto daimyate at that time.

I think Kyokuzan 玉山 met the right time. Because of this, the learning for self-cultivation 爲己之學 fell silent in the world and things became like this. On top of that, since the school of Sorai 徙佐 became popular, we had nothing to do but to carry the (Confucian) scriptures and move to remote mountain areas.45)

Akiyama Kyokuzan 秋山玉山 (?-1763), who recommended the establishment of the Jishūkan 時習館 of his daimyate school 藩校 and served as its first professor, is regarded as a scholar of the Eclectic School 折衷學派46) who insisted to “take the old annotations 古注 as foundation while not repealing the new annotations 新注.”47) In Motoda’s “Account of the 60th Birthday 還曆之記” we find the following words by Shōnan 小楠 “The Jishukan 時習館, that was established in the 5th year of the Horeki 宝暦 era (1755), was fundamentally excellent, even though the studies weren’t honest 正大, Kyokuzan is essentially a study of Sorai’s thoughts and merely a philosophy of diction 文辭.”48) Although calling it Eclectic School, from the angle of Jitsugaku School 実學派 Kyokuzan was merely a scholar who, according to Sorai, failed in “learning for self-cultivation 爲己之學” and, as a result, the “honest” philosophy (i.e. the orthodox Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi) lost its position in the Kumamoto daimyate.

About the “learning for self-cultivation 爲己之學”, which stems from the “Analects of Confucius 論語”, Zhu Xi expounds in his “Collected Annotations 集註”: “In the sayings of the sages are many debates about the advantages and disadvantages when the learners use their minds. However, I have never seen such as urgent and important

45) Mutō et al., Higo Bunken Sōho no. 4, ch. ‘答栗崎某・又’ : 654.
line”49), which makes basically clear what the study of the mind is about. And Toegye, too, interpreted the learning for self-cultivation according to Zhu Xi as the study of the mind, as can be seen in “to use one’s mind inwardly one builds up and obtains things gradually”50), “what is aspiring this learning (for self-cultivation) is called the mind 心 and to make this learning is called work 事”51) and other sentences. Of course, Taiya expressed this to be a concept related to the study of the mind 心術 as follows:

(Question) Nowadays the so-called scholars studying Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism are only interested in the external things. What is the reason for this?

(Taiya’s reply) The reason for this is that their goal is not learning for self-cultivation, their mind is only interested in language and letters. Even if they could explicate and clarify the teachings of the sages based on Zhu Xi’s theory, it would be just the way that Buddhists deal with their scriptures and in no way at all helpful to the study of the mind.52)

For Taiya learning for self-cultivation was learning that was assisting the study of the mind.53)

When we look at Sorai’s opinion, he interprets the learning for self-cultivation as follows: “Confucius’ words refer to (concentrating all one’s strength on) studying. Studying here means poetry, books, rites and music 詩書禮樂. The gentleman 君子

49) Lunyu Jizhu (論語集註)Xianwen(憲問) ch. 25. “聖賢論學者用心得失之際，其說多矣。然未有如此言之切而要者”
50) Yi, Toegye, Bojeung Toegye Jeonjip vol. 4, “答李宏仲問目”：229. “以此譬為己之學，用心於內，銖累寸積而有得也”
51) Ibid., “答 姚姪問目”：310. “相在爾室註，胡氏曰，上文引詩，但見學者有為己之心，此兩引詩，方見學者有為己之學，所謂心與事，何以分之。志於其學，謂之心；方為其學，謂之事”
52) Mutō et al., Higo Bunken Shō sho no.4, “體驗說”：611.
53) About Taiya’s “self-cultivation (爲己)” Kusumoto Masatsugu 植本正繼 wrote: “As the first step in Taiya’s study aside from myself nothing has a purpose, therefore I go back to myself, in the end this means to go back to my mind” (above-mentioned paper: 12-13), and Hiraishi Naoaki 平石直昭 explains in relation with the concept called “huizhou 回輖”: “The subject that pursues the secular value makes a 180 degree turn and by facing his inner mind he aims there at his inherent highest virtue 明德.” (”大塚退野學派の朱子學思想”. In: Yokoi Shōnan: Kōryū no Senkusha (橫井小楠: 1809-1869: 「公共」の先驅者), edited by Ryōen Minamoto (源了圓). Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2009: 50.)
studies poetry, books, rites and music and makes these virtues (of which he gained knowledge through studying) his own. The petty person 小人 only speaks in front of others merely with his mouth and nothing else. That is the whole of Confucius’ meaning. However, coming to the Confucianism of the Song dynasty, because it has been construed as the study of the mind 心術, whose harmful consequences certainly cannot be separated from a self-righteousness of people that only care about themselves and turn the world into a useless thing. This is a severe fault.”

The meaning of “self-cultivation” that Confucius spoke of is not related in any way with the study of the mind 心術 that is spoken about in Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism, it means no more than to study a specific culture and institutions that are symbolized through poetry, books, rites and music and the individual benefit (knowledge) one gains from the results for oneself.

Sorai denounced the inner study of the mind which is emphasized in Zhu Xi’s philosophy to resemble the attempt of a madman who claims to cure his own mental illness, and explicated that the principles of the former kings such as Rites and Music, Punishment and Laws 禮樂刑政 were not spontaneous but manufactured by the saints as a strategy for the pacification of the world based on these cultures and institutions deployed everywhere. The separation of morality and politics as well as the proposal of a world from an artificial idea of nature were the buds by which the so-called modern thinking could be recognized. But even though Sorai on the other hand says it was for the whole world, he subsequently puts emphasis on the external system or benefit, and from this point there is room left for him to receive criticism as a utilitarian. Here is what Shōnan pointed out:

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54) "論語徵" (憲問). In: Ogyū Sorai Zenshu (荻生徂徠全集), vol. 4. Tokyo: Misuzu Shoten (みすず書房), 1978: 201. “孔子之言，以語學也。學謂學詩書禮樂也。君子學詩書禮樂以成德於己，小人徒為人言之。孔子所言，止此耳。至於宋儒以此為心術，則其弊必不免於辨髦天下獨善其身，深之失也。学者察著。


56) "道者統名也。舉禮樂刑政凡先王所建者，合而命之也。非離禮樂刑政別有所謂道也" (Ibid., "辯道" paragraph 3: 201.) “先王之道，非天地自然之道也。蓋先王以聰明餋知之德，受天命，王天下，其一心以安天下為務，是以盡其心力，極其知巧，作爲是道” (Ibid., paragraph 3.), “先王之道，安天下之道也” (Ibid., "辯道" paragraph 7: 202) etc.
In recent years there has been a strong scholar named Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山 (1730 - 1804) who advocated Zhu Xi’s studies. I consider him to be quite a capable scholar. However, I didn’t concern myself with that this man saw dao 道 from the other side. He was just a person who was exceptional by nature, who talked about Zhu Xi’s study of phenomena of nature 格物之學 and was brilliant in world affairs, but because he became completely oblivious in the most important sphere of respect and virtue and abandoned the study of the mind as something entirely utilitarian, he only pursued this meaning in self-conservation and critical self-examination 存養省察 too and to the bitter end didn’t understand what it was. In short, this is equivalent to letting Sorai speak about Zhu Xi’s philosophy, and the reason that these studies (of Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism) largely went astray is because of Chikuzan. [...] Even though in case of Sorai this weak point is easily noticeable because he overtly spoke of utilitarianism, in the case of Chikuzan who outwardly claimed to support Zhu Xi’s philosophy this flaw is hard to see.57)

This excerpt is a paragraph from a letter that Shōnan had sent to the Confucian Honjō Ichirō 本莊一郎 (lifetime data ambiguous) in the Kurume daimyōte 久留米藩 after he came back from his study visit in Edo (Tōkyō) and withdrew for a while to inform him of the newly established views from the Study Assembly 講學會 of the Jitsugaku School 實學派 centering on Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism. This text briefly summarizes the History of Confucianism in East Asia (History of Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism) after Zhu Xi, and an important assessment of Toegye is published here too. “I think the true Confucian scholar of the Ming dynasty is Xue Wenqing 薛文淸 (薛瑄). Aside from him, Yi Toegye from Korea (Joseon) can be pointed out; I consider Toegye as rather superior to Xue Wenqing and I think of the real Confucians that cannot be found again either in the past or in the present after Zhu Xi; there are only these two scholars. Therefore, scholars should pay attention to read books like ‘Records of Studying 讀書錄’ and ‘Personal Reflections 自省錄’ etc., together with the books of Cheng and Zhu 程朱之書.”58) Here, Toegye is appraised of being

even more excellent than Xue Wenqing, who was actually the supreme scholar in the history of Confucianism in East Asia after Zhu Xi.

Important here is that the reason that Shōnan appreciated Toegye that highly is nothing but the emphasis on the study of the mind. This can be confirmed through the comments surrounding the phrase “don’t let anything pile up in your mind 不以累於靈臺” from the “Personal Reflections” that Shōnan gave to his followers as mentioned above. After citing these words of Toegye in an article that Shōnan provided to Mitera Sansaku 三寺三作 (1821-1895), a samurai of the Fukui daimyate 福井藩, he wrote down: “Scholars should develop a characteristic quality 本領. Once this characteristic quality is established, it becomes possible to conduct oneself accordingly. The so-called characteristic quality is right there in the words of Yi Toegye. Therefore, if you truly find enlightenment and your mind becomes untarnished and pure, you can become unconcerned with favorable circumstances and hardships. That is the reason why establishing one’s characteristic quality from studying is crucial.”59) In response to a question of his first disciple Tokutomi Kazutaka 德富一敬 (1822-1914) he said that he “wasn’t suggesting that the characteristic quality would refer to the nature of benevolence 仁, righteousness 義, rites 禮 or wisdom 智. […] If someone says ‘as expected things are like this’ because he is paying attention towards his true intention and truly understands it in his mind – when it all comes together, then this is the time we say that one becomes aware of his characteristic quality 本領. Once this enlightenment has been achieved, all external mundane desires, such as dire straits and influential times 窮通, gains and losses 得失, glory and disgrace 榮辱, etc. will be surely disregarded in order to not let anyone into this detached mind.”60) In other words, he clarifies that the “characteristic quality” of Confucianism is the study of the mind.

58) Ibid.: 130.
59) Ibid., “李語書後”: 723. “學者當先立本領. 本領已立, 斯有可居之處. 所謂本領者, 在李退溪之此言. 而真心會得, 洒然脫却, 則順逆逆境無不通而泰然. 是學所以貴立本領也”
60) Ibid., “聖學問答”: 944.
In this correspondence Shōnan evaluates among others also five Japanese scholars: Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619), who was also deeply related to Toegye, as well as Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1619-1682) and Asami Keisai 淺見絅齋 (1652-1711), Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢 (1658-1734), and the above-mentioned Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山 (1730-1804) of the same school. In other words, the above cited words of Shōnan set the focus on the scholars that were considered as the Zhu Xi school of Japan, while Sorai doesn’t get into the center of attention. Sorai is presented as a comparative standard to assess Chikuzan, who was known both as the director of the Osaka 大阪 Kaitokudō 懐德堂 school and as a Neo-Confucian, and from this point the utilitarian character of Sorai, who makes rather light of respectful and virtuous conduct or self-conservation and critical self-examination while arguing for a ‘public common good’, stands out even more. From a different angle, it can be said that Shōnan’s final recognition of Sorai as a utilitarian shows quite clearly his stance about being a successor of Zhu Xi, Toegye, and Taiya and that the essence of the transmission can be found in the study of the mind.

Motoda’s assessment of Sorai follows the same perspective: “I saw through the fact that there is no original principle 本源 in the economic theory (“經世濟民”) of Sorai.”61) In these words, Motoda took note of his impressions after he, at the age of 24 years, had given up studying at the Jishukan 時習館 and in the process of self-education had read Sorai’s “Talking Politics 政談”, “Sealed Records 鈐錄”, etc. when at this time he came to realize through Mencius’ dicta “there are only benevolence and righteousness 亦有仁義而已” and “everyone has a merciful mind 人皆有不忍之心” that Sorai’s arguments were wrong. Motoda summarized the meaning of Mencius as “to govern the world depends on whether benevolence resides inside my mind, therefore I must not pursue it on the outside” 62) to criticize from this point Sorai’s dictum that “there is no characteristic quality.” For Motoda the quintessence of Confucianism is not to be found in its outer system of culture and

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62) Ibid.
institutions, but in the internal self-awareness.

Here, we can return to Taiya and quote one more paragraph criticizing Sorai.

Recently I have been reading (Sorai’s) “Uncovering the Analects 論語徵”, and although I have not yet read it all I am taken aback by the strange words and sophistry. However, someone who has just a little knowledge will immediately notice the shallowness and arrogant tendencies of his argument, so because it will have vanished in less than a hundred years, I think there is no reason for great concern.63)

This sharp criticism is a little overdone. Looking back from today, Taiya’s prediction that Sorai’s studies would have vanished in less than one hundred years was correct in some ways, but incorrect in others. This is because just as Yamazumi above lamented, it was not Sorai who occupied the general trend under imperialism but Zhu Xi studies, while in the present academic world the philosophy of Sorai apparently is treated as a slightly more appealing thought. Anyway, such critical consciousness that borders on hatred in the days when Sorai’s philosophy was in vogue is something that can be understood as another expression of urgency to defend the orthodox Neo-Confucianism = study of the mind, that has been barely understood from Toegye’s philosophy.

2) Critique of Yamazaki Ansai

The keenness with which Taiya and his successors defended the orthodox Neo-Confucianism or the study of the mind can also be found in the criticism of Ansai, of whom can be said that he venerated Toegye from the inner faction of Zhu Xi studies or a similar group in the history of Confucianism in Edo.

As for Ansai, even though the assessments calling him a scholar who emphasizes the inner mind and often in connection with Yi Toegye of the Joseon dynasty are

63) Mutō et al., Higo Bunken Sōsho no. 4, “答栗崎某”：646.
predominant, he actually is neither. Ansai stated “Yi Toegye highly praised Cheng Fuxin’s 崇復心 chart of the philosophy of the mind 心學圖. [...] I (Ansai) think that this praise of Toegye turned out to be a mistake”65), and his criticism of the respect for Toegye’s “Annotations on the Scripture of the Heart 心經附註” is already well known. Actually, if we look at some of the statements that he made about the relationship between the mind and the body, it becomes clear that Ansai was a scholar who valued the result of action, but not the mind: “If you straighten your appearance and never commit rash acts, then your inner mind will also become right. If the outward appearance becomes corrupted, the inner mind too is disheartened and cannot guard itself anymore.”66) And: “Even though to think of evil things in our wishes 意 is not subject to punishment, if someone carries out something evil with his body he surely is bound to be punished. Therefore, what the studies of the saints are based on is too obviously what this body is based on; this is an utmost reasonable logic that is irrefutable. [...] Even if we dispense reward and punishment, it should be done properly according to the actions of this body.”67)

Ansai further hands down some advice that shows his understanding of the mind from the religious field in the latter half of his thoughts where he is advocating Suika shintō 垂加神道, and remarks about body and mind: “When one passes through the torii 鳥居, the pillar gate entrance to the Shintō shrine 神社, the whole body becomes a deity 神(kami). Do it in this way, and your mind and body will become purified. Even though the gods don’t reside in the filthy mind and body of ordinary people, once the body enters the torii my mind and body become purified. If one proceeds in front of a god, all dirt of the mind vanishes and becomes purified.”68)

64) About the discussion in relation to Ansai’s mind following, see my manuscript “元田永孚的思想形成と展開” (Eom, Seog-In (엄석인), “Motoda Nagazane no Shisō Keisei to Tenkai” (元田永孚的思想形成と展開). In: Research Bulletin of the Rinri Institute of Ethics (倫理研究所紀要), no.27. Rinri Institute of Ethics Research (倫理研究所) 2018: 116-138.) for further reference.


Meanwhile, Toegye emphasized a lot the importance of the study of the mind in everyday life: “To preserve the human mind is most difficult. I have tried it before, yet it was difficult to preserve the mind between every step.”69) Or: “The moment when the mind begins to move becomes the crossroads of death and life, how would you not be afraid?”70) Compared to Ansai’s point of view, it can be said that the perspective of these two scholars are located on different levels. Taiya and his successors’ criticism of Ansai also focuses directly on this point.

The following is Shōnan’s evaluation of Ansai. From the letter send to the aforementioned Honjō Ichirō 本莊一郎 he quotes a comment from the “Recorded Quotations of Ōtsuka Taiya 大塚退野先生語錄” and he adds his own opinion.

This is Yamazaki Ansai, who is following Seika 懐窩 in spreading the philosophy of Cheng und Zhu throughout Japan. I think younger scholars should deeply respect these two scholars. Ansai in particular corrected the diacritic marks of the Four Books 四書, compiled the “Huowenjilüe 或問輯略”, sorted out and clarified the chaotic situation surround the meaning of yi 易 after Zhu Xi, wrote the “Shūeki Engi 周易衍義” which was based on the “Zhouyi Benyi 周易本義” and I think he is a man of unparalleled insight in his endeavor to clarify Zhu Xi’s original intentions. In addition, he tried to trace everything like “Minor Learning 小學”, “Records of Things at Hand 近思錄” etc. back to Zhu Xi while distinguishing it from scholars of shallow learning and excluding the utilitarian thought (common good) and attempted to disclose this dao 道 to the world, so I think the contributions of Ansai are enormous. Unfortunately, to make these studies public became the primary goal, perhaps the base to cultivate himself is weak, is also a bit different from the so-called effort to be made on the inside, his eccentric habits are severe, and his followers, too, have similar bad habits. Ōtsuka Taiya, a former Confucian scholar of our Han 藩 (= Kumamoto daimyate), says in his “Recorded Quotations 語錄”: “Ansai’s philosophy is if he knows the one thing how to acquire knowledge

69) Yi, Bojeung Toegye Jeonjip no. 4, “退溪先生言行錄” vol. 1: 29. “人之持心最難. 嘗自驗之, 一步之間, 心在一步, 道在一步”
70) Ibid. “其機則生死路頭也, 可不懼哉”
致知 then he is also going to carry out just this one thing and is, therefore, incorrect.” “It all follows the original resolve 立志. How can a man die without having made a name for himself, that means the reason for that is to be found in the industry (功業 = the common good), and the philosophy is just like this.” “Because Ansai’s original goal was to propagate the philosophy of Cheng and Zhu in the world, his philosophy is just like this.” I think this (Taiya’s) argument is justified. In short, Ansai’s philosophy (the philosophy of Cheng and Zhu) is intended to be propagated to the world, so I think we should fully recognize the fact that it cannot be said that there are no harmful consequences.71)

The parts indicated by the quotation marks are Taiya’s remarks. Shōnan quotes Taiya’s words, while “is justified” shows his agreement. The main point of Taiya's and Shōnan’s assessment of Sorai is that although he contributed to the popularization of Neo-Confucianism in Japan by compiling and writing books about Neo-Confucianism, eventually there was also much harm done by scholars who neglected the study of the mind with the proposition to “cultivate one’s own essence 自家修養之本地” and to “learn with all of one's strength concentrated exclusively on the inner side 専用力於內”, which became the gist of Neo-Confucianism. While Shōnan in this article chose a rather cautious attitude concerning Ansai’s contributions and criticism like “perhaps (the base to cultivate himself is weak)” and “(is also) a bit (different from the so-called effort to be made on the inside)” etc., the following article unfolds a more obvious criticism.

There were the two schools of Hayashi Razan 林羅山 and that of Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋, the philosophy of Ansai’s school declined under its harmful influences to a rather outdated condition, and despite Razan’s school worked unremittingly on questioning and learning in order to mend these harmful consequences, since everyone was studying towards the same direction in the end it seems that educated people said they wanted to get rid of it.72)

72) Ibid., “遊歷見聞書”: 842.
In the end, for this man as a person engaged in the philosophy of Ansai’s school, the whole study of the mind doesn’t exist, and because this disease that he plans only outwardly to get rid of is severe, the people of that house disregard him and there is no one who communicates with each other.73)

Even though Shōnan’s criticism of the academic traditions of the Himeji daimyate 姬路藩 in the excerpt above doesn’t clearly show what this “outdated” condition of Ansai’s school actually would be, we can speculate that it includes the want of the study of the mind to cultivate the self. The following excerpt is a comment on the search for the reason for a certain person in the vicinity to cause inconvenience from Ansai’s philosophy, and Shōnan informs us here, too, where the quintessence of the philosophy was to be found. We can confirm Motoda’s criticism of Ansai from the following text. The following paragraph is the final segment of a poem from the middle of Motoda’s collection of Han poems “Kōen Yogin (Jiangyan yuyin) 講筵餘吟” with the title (詩題) “Taiya Shinen Ni Sensei (The two masters in the abyss of Taiya, 退野深淵二先生)”:

> Although the renowned Confucian scholars in the world can be counted on one hand, who is it that speaks honestly about morality?
> Neither is it Hayashi Razan 林羅山 nor Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋, and it also is not Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋,
> I just follow the two masters of our daimyate (Tōhi 東肥).74)

> “The two masters of our daimyate” that can be seen at the present are Taiya and Hirano Shinen 平野深淵 (1705-1757). Hirano as a student of Taiya is the scholar about whom Taiya spoke in glowing terms when he send a letter to Kurisaki Risai 栗崎履齋 (1700-1781), another follower, and wrote: “The will to pour all my strength exclusively into the Neo-Confucian philosophy of Cheng and Zhu and look inwardly
has recently become very urgent. […] I believe in the ‘Yichuan Yizhuan 伊川易傳’ (by Cheng Yi 程頤75), so I was reading it intensively for three or four years, the logical composition is truly admirable all the while it is attending to contemporary matters. This is not just the argument of a young Confucian student. I have never seen anyone like him again. I think he will be one of the well-versed and excellent scholars of the philosophy of these days.”

While Motoda raises Hayashi Razan, Itô Jinsai and Ansai as three representative Japanese Confucian scholars, he denigrates them for not having correctly conveyed Confucianism. The core of Confucianism lies in the recognition of its “morality”, and we find this “morality” in Motoda’s other verbalization of “to seek from the inside for the fundamental knowledge about human emotions and relations 下學”, “the schooling method of Yao, Shun, Confucius, and Mencius” and eventually the concepts related to the study of the mind. While Motoda criticizes Taiya, below are the references he made to Toegye.

Ōtsuka Taiya believed in Toegye and passed down the teachings of Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, and one could get a sense of the way of Confucius and Mencius. If one considers the first thing entered, he will with a deep faith and exclusively from the inside pursue the search for the fundamental knowledge about human emotions and relations and eventually he might gain his characteristic quality.76)

Among the Confucians of the peaceful period after the Keichō era 慶長 (from 1596 until 1615) 77) only one man – Kumazawa Banzan 熊澤蕃山78) – discussed the “Daodejing Lun” 道德經綸, aside from him there is the philosophy of Ōtsuka Taiya who came to grasp the essence of Cheng and Zhu and recognized the

77) This is a reference to peaceful Edo period after the Japanese invasion of Korea and the Imjin War (1592–1598).
78) For the relationship of Kumazawa Banzan 熊澤蕃山 (1619-1691) and Motoda see my manuscript “Motoda Nagazane no Shisō Keisei to Tenkai” for further reference.
meaning of the benevolence of which Confucius spoke through propagation from Yi Toegye of the Joseon dynasty, as well as his pupil Hirano Shinen who strove for the morality of Cheng Yi 程易 and was the incarnation of the mind of the minister Yi Yin 伊尹 (of the Shang Dynasty). Because the philosophy of these three masters has indeed received the method to use the mind from Yao, Shun, Confucius, and Mencius, they naturally must have become the model teachers of later generations.\(^7^9\)

The preceding text is a paragraph from the “Reading and Commenting on ‘Sēsai Nishiyori’s Questions and Answers’” (讀西依答問說), which was written in 1847 when the “Study Assembly 講學會” was held in Kumamoto, and the following text is a segment from the “Personal Opinion on the General Idea of Education 教育大意私議”, which the royal tutor 侍讀 of the Kumamoto seignior used in 1870 for his lecture. Even after more than 20 years had passed since the formative academic period in his youth, it can be seen that he still consistently sought the characteristic traits of Confucianism (the way of Confucius and Mencius) through the studies of his inner mind 心術工夫 and the mind method 心法. Because of such an adamant stance not only on Razan or Jinsai\(^8^0\) but also on Ansai, who was subjectively and objectively recognized in the history of thought of the Edo period as an eminent Confucian, can be passed criticism for being a scholar who passed flawed information about Confucianism (= morality = the mind method). To put it another way, it can be seen, too, as a dispute about Confucian orthodoxy and who in the history of thought of Japan would be the legitimate successor to the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi and Toegye.

If we try to bring the relationship between Motoda and Toegye in the focus, with the materials that at the present can confirm Motoda’s reference to Toegye, including the earlier mentioned comment by Matsuda, which cannot be verified, the one indirect way through Taiya’s intermediation is all we’ve got. When we try to compare Taiya and Shōnan directly talking about Toegye with the things for


\(^{80}\) About Razan’s and Jinsai’s repudiation of the study of the mind and Banzan’s and Motoda’s relationship see my aforementioned manuscript “Motoda Nagazane no Shiso Keisei to Tenkai” for reference.
which they express their admiration, the difference becomes apparent. Somehow, with sentences like “from early on it had the meaning of royalist administration 尊王經世”81) or “since the teachings of Confucius are in Japan we love the Japanese sovereign and [...] for Japan the establishment of the Japanese way and the conduction of the Japanese education must become the central idea”82) etc., it all boils down to an intensified connection with the so-called ideology of the benevolent rule of the emperor 皇道論. But, then again, it also must not be forgotten that Motoda until his later years, too, adhered to the Confucian thinking of Taiya that was established through Toegye, especially the study of the mind that laid the foundation for the learning for self-cultivation. The following is a paragraph from the new year lectures at the imperial palace (1882) for which Motoda, 65 years at that time, chose content from “The Plan of the Great Yu” (DaYu mo 大禹謨) chapter of the “Book of History” (Shujing 書經), which became the reference of the study of the mind, as topic: “Because the mind of man is endangered and moral principles are just negligible, we must act accurately and be persistent, so we truly can take the middle path” (人心惟危, 道心惟微, 惟精惟一, 允執厥中).

It only depends on how one deals with the mind of man and morality to make him either a saint or a criminal, a virtuous man or a villain for the same reason, and how one handles these things is really important. […] If someone hears something with his ears and allows it to influence his mind, but doesn’t control his morality, in the end if he starts to enjoy tumultuous noise and vulgar music, yields to the singing and dancing amusements, and seems to become delighted to queue up in front of singing girls 聲妓滿前, then he cannot clean himself and even the empire becomes ungovernable.83)

If we compare this paragraph with the following section by Toegye, we can also recognize that Motoda’s adherence to Toegye’s emphasis on the importance of the

82) Kaigo, Motoda Nagazane: 209.
study of the mind in everyday life formed the basis of his own thoughts up to his later days: “A disturbance (of the mind of man) happens most easily under bustling and turbulent circumstances. From an early age on, I made every effort in this mind study and knew I could almost not be disturbed, when I was Sa-in in the Ŭijeongbu 議政府舍人 (an administrative position of the Jeoson administration in the 4th rank) I saw the queues in front of the Gisaeng (singing girls) and I became aware of the awakening happiness. Because in the moment when the moving of mind began, it instantly turned into a forked road between dying and living, so how could I not be afraid?”

5. Instead of a Conclusion: The Discourse on the “Identity of Heaven and Man” and a Suggestion for the Korean-Japanese Relationship

Above we reviewed how the form in which Taiya and his successors Shônan and Motoda embraced the philosophy of Toegye is focused on the study of the mind and practical ethics. It seems we have been mentioning their comments about handling the study of the mind a bit too excessively above, but if the opinions of those who searched the characteristic quality of Confucianism at the mind would have unfolded a bit more strength at the turning point of modern times; it is very inconvenient to think that another blueprint for a relation between Korea and Japan that isn’t the former historical relation of colonization and being subjugated would not have been possible too.

The study of the mind in Toegye’s everyday life isn’t merely languishing in a dimension of individual improvement, but pointing at a grand outlook of the world of “there is no distinction between heaven and man” (tianren wu jian 天人無間), when he says “accept the (unforeseen) events and learn about the things and li 理 (Principle)

84) Yi, Bojeung Toegye Jeonjip vol. 4, “退溪先生言行錄” vol. 1: 29. “紛華波蕩之中，最易移入，余嘗用力於此，庶不為所動，而嘗為議政府舍人，聲妓滿前，便覺有一端喜悅之心，其機則生死路頭也，可不懼哉”
of all things equals the nature (xing 性) of the mind”85), and “the li of me and that of all things in creation are ultimately one”86). When Toegye became aware of “the original nature of benevolence” he directly spoke about its conditions: “Heaven and earth 乾坤 I take as my parents, all people are my brothers and all things are becoming one with me, with a heart that embraces and loves everything, there is no differentiation between inside and outside, far and near; it will become clear that to serve the parents and to serve heaven follow the same reason.”87) It has been mentioned earlier that this kind of thought of unity between heaven and man had been acknowledged by Taiya, too, in his dictum “heaven and man are identical”.

Below and replacing a conclusion I will try to round off the argument by applying the theory of the unity between heaven and man, which is based on the study of the mind, on Toegye’s discussion on Japan 對日本論, as well as on the discourse about foreign countries 對外論 of the Kumamoto Jitsugaku school.

Toegye’s discussion on Japan appears in full in the “Gapsin Geolmuljeol-ui Saso 甲辰乞勿絶倭使疏” submitted to King Myeongjong 明宗, and even though this admonition on the one hand follows the convention of the “discourse on civilization and barbarians 華夷論” that regards Japan as a land of “barbarians and wild beasts 夷狄禽獸” it is the ultimate goal to accept the Japanese request for seeking friendly relations. The basic premise for accepting this request was the question whether or not the barbaric Japanese could be considered as equal people88), and whether the “sincere mind” was the same as in the phrase “the righteous government is magnanimous and without rash distrust and will not express disregard for faithfulness nor engage in wild speculations. When someone is said to come with the sincere intention (mind) to make friendship this can only be accepted”89) was a precondition of the acceptance.

Moreover the reason to accept Japan’s request was that in these words: “War is heinous and dangerous, to benefit the nation 社稷 and comfort the people is an urgent matter. […] Why of all things treat them harshly and incur their enmity and bring worries of coming into conflict upon oneself?”90) It seems to claim to prevent war and make the life of the people peaceful. The effect can be summed up: “Not showing force and treating others open-minded 虚心 will certainly be thought of with big favor; it will move and delight the heart and guide each other to offer sincerity.”91)

Standing against the opposing public opinion, the firm attitude arguing eagerly to accept friendly relations was probably supported by the strong convictions from heading towards the above-mentioned unity of heaven and man and the benevolence that followed it. No matter how the consequences in the real world are, I think the attitude that says to seek friendly relations with a ‘sincere mind’ and also to act with this mind wasn’t the utopia of which Toegye’s study of the mind was aiming.

This theory of unity of heaven and man also comes from Taiya, who followed Toegye. In the Japanese history of thought, I think there is almost no example that someone possesses such a distinct concept about the unity of heaven and man, if we introduce it then as follows.

Generally speaking, if we discuss the innate nature of man and things, it is just the mandate of heaven because it is equal and free of discrimination. One aspect of the mandate of heaven is the unity of heaven and man. However, the reason that the character ming 命 is attached to tian 天 is to reveal the fact that humans and things have all kinds of different forms and the nature (xing 性) with which they are furnished according to their form is the same as that of heaven, and they temporarily borrowed the character ming 命 (mandate) from “the order of the monarch 君命” to explain it. The fact is that heaven works through the monarch and morality through the vassal, so these two are not relatively opposite things.92)

89) Ibid. “王道蕩蕩，不逆詐，不億不信。苟以是心至，斯受之而已”
90) Ibid.: 168. “兵凶戰危，以利社稷安生靈爲急。……何必甚之而生怨，致搏噬之患哉”
91) Ibid. “忘其勢，而無心以處之，則彼必以爲大德，而感悅於其心，相率而投款矣，是所謂化之也”
92)
Although a concept like the direct unity between heaven and man doesn’t appear in Shōnan’s thinking, the spirit derived from this was exactly adopted. Following the demand for opening of the Japanese ports to foreign trade that came in 1853 with the emergence of the so-called Black Ships of the U.S. fleet that were visiting Uraga under the tumultuous circumstances at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, Shōnan at first argued for the expulsion of foreigners, and his position changed through the opened-ports-faction, but his basic attitude towards foreign countries didn’t change. He said that “when one adheres to the spirit of heaven and earth then he respects benevolence and righteousness”, and his mind was full of “complete sincerity and anxiety”.

Among the nations of the world, Japan is exceptional and the reason why it is in the world called land of the virtuous is because it adheres to the spirit of heaven and earth and regards benevolence and righteousness as important. If so, then that, too, is the case when receiving the envoys of the U.S.A. and Russia and only obtained by going through the method of the fundamental moral principles of heaven and earth, benevolence and righteousness. If this method falls apart, even though amicable relations (between the nations) are established, the political system will get damnified, and even fights might arise. […] Japan’s policy towards foreign countries knows only two kinds: to establish foreign relations with countries with moral principles and reject countries without moral principles.93)

Japan, when it comes to receiving foreign nations, makes no exception to the principle, even if they say they will build walls in two or three layers, if we cultivate friendship with an earnest and truthful mind, I think there won’t be a place in the world we can’t reach.94)

And claims that the foundation that came to this country of “fundamental moral principles of heaven and earth, benevolence and righteousness” derived directly from the “Xinde philosophy” that regards the Confucian mind as important.

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94) Ibid., “沼山對話”: 909.
Western philosophy as just a philosophy of business objectives is no Xin-de philosophy. Therefore, both the nobleman and the petty person, above and below were disregarded and only through a philosophy of business objectives the enterprises slowly developed. However, because there is no Xin-de philosophy they possess no knowledge of human nature and even actual agreements in trade negotiations are questioned thoroughly, so that eventually it becomes war. [...] If we get to know benevolence through the Xin-de philosophy there will also be no war.95)

The Japan described here by Shōnan with a viewpoint from the end of the Tokugawa shogunate was not an image of the future of a country of national prosperity and military power, but a country that centered on morality and was “only displaying its great cause to the world.”96) It also goes without saying that the “principle of benevolence and righteousness of heaven and earth” and “complete sincerity and anxiety”, which were established through the “Xin-de philosophy” and became the principle outlook on foreign relations and in favor of which Shōnan argued, and the ‘sincere heart’ that Toegye spoke about have something in common with each other.

Which position would Shōnan have taken if he had lived until the time when the advocacy of a “punitive expedition to Korea (seikanron 征韓論)” came to the boil? Although we could try to guess to some degree his principles of foreign relations, the following is the actual opinion of Motōda, who was in the maelstrom of the Seikanron controversy, about the relation to Korea.

Up to now, Joseon has been nothing but a vassal state receiving protection from China 支那. Nonetheless, as we intend to maintain our dignity of independence towards foreign countries and Japan as well insists on the condition of equality in the treaties with the U.S.A., Great Britain and Germany [...] Japan chose from the world the national policy of neutrality, and stated never to interfere in Joseon, whether Joseon achieves independence or not is as with the U.S.A. or Great Britain, etc. left to every country’s own resources [...]97)

95) Ibid., “沼山閑話”: 926.
96) Ibid., “送左・太二樹洋行”: 726. “明堯舜孔子之道，盡西洋器械之術，何止富國，何止強兵，布大義於四海而已”
We can also see one aspect of his thinking forming through a comment in line with the doctrine of the benevolent emperor 皇道主義, in which the assertion that Japan wishes not to interfere in Korea and to keep a neutral position is noteworthy. It seems as if Toegye’s appeal prevented war and protected the lives of the people, and it would be a nearby thought that in light of the battlefields of the colonial struggle of the Western Powers the Japanese citizens first worried about their safety.

Usually the big virtue of a sovereign lies in benevolence, and the only way to govern the country is to love the people (citizens). Or when the heart that loves the people can’t help it, even though it is said that the business flourishes, even though it is said that the nation becomes rich and powerful, if the innate benevolence goes wrong there is no visible remainder either. Now the military and naval forces are also enlarged because of the love for the people, and the promulgation of the constitutional law and the civil code, too, result from the love for the people. Education and the encouragement of the industry also happen because of the love for the people. Railways and the telegraphic industry are also following the love for the people. Usually the one thing the state at least enforces is the avoidance of a lack of love for its people. If it doesn’t come from a mind that loves people, but merely from the greed to compete with European civilization, and to let the business flourish, then it isn’t the mind of a person responsible towards the state and neither does it follow the public sentiment.98)

This passage reflects Motoda’s effort as royal tutor at that time to shape the Meiji emperor into a virtuous ruler like Yao and Shun. Although the citizens here are of course limited to the citizens of Japan in those days, it is hard to imagine that Motoda, who advocated the realization of such benevolence, would be someone to call an invasion and abuse of another country (that is, Korea) a good idea, even if was a priority of his fellow countrymen.

To sum things up, I think when treating other countries neither the “sincere mind”,

the “principle of benevolence and righteousness of heaven and earth” and the attitude of “complete sincerity and anxiety” nor the fictitious face of a “state” and competition, but the extension of the policy of true “benevolence” that genuinely cares for the real lives of the citizens is by which the desirable blueprint for the future between Korea and Japan can be created as suggested by Toegye and his successors, the Kumamoto daimyate scholars.

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