

Book Reviews

Review of *Dongya wenhua jiaoliu zhong de Rujia jingdian yu linian: Hudong, zhuanhua yu ronghe* (Confucian Classics and Their Ideas in the Context of Cultural Exchange in East Asia: Interaction, Transformation, and Integration), by Huang Chun-chieh. Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2011. [東亞文化交流中的儒家經典與理念：互動、轉化與融合／黃俊傑著。臺北：國立臺灣大學出版中心，2010。台幣200元。184頁。]

Dr. Chun-chieh Huang, Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Science at National Taiwan University, has written a large corpus of work dealing with international influences and confluences in the field of Confucianism and East Asian intellectual history in general. A pioneer in this field, as far back as 1984 he wrote an extensive paper comparing the work of Dai Zhen (1724–1777) of the Qing dynasty, Itō Jinsai (1627–1705) of Tokugawa Japan, and Chong Yag-yong (1762–1836) of late Chosŏn Korea.¹ Up to that point we see little or no work treating the thought of Korean and Japanese Confucian scholars as sources of insight that could contribute to the enrichment of the Confucian tradition as a whole, let alone work that made detailed comparative analyses of such thinkers.

The present work is much more sweeping in scope, but retains the comparative angle that is the hallmark of Huang’s scholarship. In the opening chapter of this book, Huang draws attention to five different angles that we can take as we rethink cultural interaction in the East Asian context. First, Huang argues that the study of East Asian intellectual history should be deeply engaged in the complex interactions between regions, as well as nations, and should free itself from a preoccupation with China as a static center of influence. In the second section of the chapter the author suggests a turn from results to processes in the new purview of regional-history studies. One of the most intriguing examples he gives of this approach is a switch in focus from texts alone to environment, which involves an analysis of how political contexts influenced the interpretation of key classical texts. We can

1 Huang Chun-chieh 黃俊傑, “Tungya chinshih Juhsueh ssuch’ao ti shin tung-siang: Tai Tung-yuan, It’eng Jen-chai yu Ting Ch’a-shan tui Menghsueh ti chiehshih” 東亞近世儒學思潮的新動向——戴東原、伊藤仁齋與丁茶山對孟學的解釋 (in Chinese and Korean), *Tasan hakpo* 6 (1984): 151–181.

call this shift of focus a transition from a narrow preoccupation with texts to the relationship between texts and contexts. This is followed by a section that introduces two problematics in the proposed field of regional history: first, the mutual influence between self (the complex mix of national and personal identity) and broader intercultural identities, and second, the problematic that emerges in the study of the relationship between culture and the power structure. In the following section, the author proposes three types of interaction as worthy of more extended investigation: the interaction between “professional intermediate agents,” such as envoys between countries, and the foreign cultures that they were frequenting; the interaction of texts, such as the books exchanged by such emissaries; and the interaction of ideas, including the formation of self-identities resulting from such exchanges, as well as the complex impact of imported classical texts on individual world views. In the concluding section of the chapter, the author proposes that the state-centric style of historical study be replaced by a broader East Asian perspective.

In the chapter titled “The Intellectual World of East Asian Confucians in the Eighteenth Century,” Huang incisively examines new trends in the study of Confucianism—an examination based on a comparative analysis of such thinkers as the Qing scholar Dai Zhen, the proponents of ancient learning (*kogaku* 古学) in Tokugawa Japan, and Chong Yag-yong of late Chosŏn Korea, thus building on the landmark study mentioned at the beginning of this review. At the outset of this sweeping piece of scholarship, Huang draws attention to two intellectual trends prominent during this period. One was opposition to Zhu Xi’s thought, especially his metaphysical approach, and the second was an emphasis on seeking reality on the basis of actual facts. Following this analysis of key similarities, Huang goes on to reveal some fascinating differences in attitudes toward Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism, which he ascribes to sharp political and cultural differences between the East Asian powers.

The following chapter discusses the ideological implications of the concept *zhongguo* (central state, China 中國) in the Chinese classics, and how it was transformed in early modern Japan and contemporary Taiwan. According to the author’s analysis of key passages containing this concept in pre-Qin (221–206 BCE) texts, the ancient Chinese envisioned *zhongguo* as the epitome of high culture and as the homeland of an educated, ethical people. In contrast, Japanese references to *zhongguo*, as exemplified in the writings of Yamaga Sokō, Sakuma Taika, and Asami Keisai, illustrate a Japanese tendency to use the term to refer to Japan and not to the mainland. For these scholars, the geographical origins of the term *zhongguo* were deemphasized and much greater significance was attributed to its cultural and philosophical import, specifically, a place that attained the mean, in terms of finding a

social balance and achieving political stability. In the case of Taiwan, Huang argues that the components of cultural and political identity embedded in the idea of *zhongguo* were turned into abstract ideals. He makes the intriguing point that the romantic bent of Chinese intellectuals blinded many to the conflicts and fault lines dividing the cultural ideal from the political ideal in Chinese History—a tendency that persists to this day.

In the concluding chapter of his book, Huang focuses on the delicate and complex relationship between interpretations of the Chinese classics and political influences in China, Korea, and Japan. Since Confucianism cannot be separated from political thought, as epitomized in the expression “self-cultivation and social harmony” (*The Great Learning*), this sort of analysis is key to our grasp of East Asian Confucianism. The significance of this approach is well illustrated in Huang’s discussion about how new meanings were imputed to key terms in the classics, especially by commentators who felt the psychological pressure of imperial power. The author makes a revealing distinction between “soft filtering” and “hard filtering” of controversial textual content. Soft filtering, which apparently was exclusive to imperial China, was the filtering of topics to be covered by the civil-service examinations, and hard filtering involved excluding passages from official versions of the classics. In the conclusion of this chapter, Huang remarks that there was a tendency for the political sphere to dominate the interpretation of the classics in East Asia because the Confucian classics contained a “viable set of values imbued with ideals and farsightedness, while the political powers were realistic and shortsighted.” This discussion provides a concise yet thought-provoking angle on the delicate tension that existed between hard-nosed political leaders intent on meeting political exigencies and the more idealistic commentators on the classics, who sought Confucius’s vision of social harmony and peace realized through leadership by virtuous example, as depicted in Mencius’s influential vision of the “Kingly Way.”

In a succeeding section, “Political Interpretation of the Confucian Classics in East Asia,” Huang looks at the opposite side of the coin. That is, he examines examples of East Asian scholar-bureaucrats who tried to influence the political order through more idealistic interpretations of the classics, or in the author’s words, by “applying the Confucian classics to guide the direction of political power in their political contexts.” In the concluding paragraphs, one of the most thought-provoking sections of the book, Huang points to a “third relationship” between interpretation of the classics and political power, namely, an effort by interpreters to maintain a balance between classical texts and political reality.

In conclusion, this book builds and expands on the author’s pioneering work on exchanges in what he calls “East Asian Confucianisms,” the intel-

lectual interactions among some of the greatest minds of China, Japan, and Korea leading to some of the most creative trends in the unfolding of Confucian thought, and will most likely trigger more scholarship in this badly neglected area. Huang's early work inspired this reviewer to conduct an in-depth investigation on the interaction between the practical-learning (*sirhak* 實學) thinkers of late Chosŏn Korea and ancient-learning thinkers of Tokugawa Japan. I have little doubt that Huang's more multifaceted comparative work in this volume will lead to a greater awareness that East Asian Confucianism is much more the result of complex international influences and confluences than the result of the slow absorption of a monolithic Chinese "Confucianism" by neighboring states.

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Review of *Shu Ki "Karei" no hanpon to shisō ni kansuru jisshōteki kenkyū* (Critical Studies of the Texts and Thought of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*), by Azuma Jūji. Suita, Japan: Kansai Daigaku Bungakubu, 2003. [朱熹『家礼』の版本と思想に関する実証的研究／吾妻重二. 吹田：関西大学文学部, 2003. 299頁] [Chinese translation: 朱熹《家礼》实证研究／吾妻重二著. 上海：华东师范大学出版社, 2012. 420頁]

This monograph in the field of Neo-Confucianism by Prof. Azuma Jūji of Kansai University was recently translated and published in Mainland China.¹ Prof. Azuma graduated from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Waseda University. During the course of his studies, he was one

1 After the publication of the Chinese translation of the present work, Prof. Wu Zhen, in *Zhonghua dushu bao*, published a review titled "A Magnum Opus in the Field of Neo-Confucianism" 朱子学研究领域的一部巅峰之作. Since Prof. Wu, the editor of the Chinese translation, presented in detail the origins of the work and Prof. Azuma's scholarly accomplishments, I will omit such details here.

of the first group of Japanese students to study in China, studying in the Philosophy Department of Peking University. While at Waseda, he studied under the well-known Daoist scholar Kusuyama Haruki, but he nevertheless decided to do research in the field of Neo-Confucianism. The thesis that he submitted in 2003 and for which he was awarded a Doctor of Letters degree was “New Research in the Field of Neo-Confucianism: The Horizon of the History of Early-Modern Scholarly Thought” 朱子学の新研究: 近世士大夫の思想史的地平 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 2004). Within this work, Prof. Azuma already presented detailed analysis of Zhu Xi’s works and thought while also paying close attention to the development of his thought in history and practice. In the present work, Prof. Azuma, focusing on Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals* 家禮, not only continues to produce research of the quality of his former studies, but also broadens his field of vision to include all of early-modern East Asia and more thoroughly and exactly investigates the practical and institutional developments of Zhu Xi’s thought.

I

Prof. Azuma believes that for a long time, people have understood Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism as a system of philosophical thought and a program for personal cultivation. These aspects are indeed the most important part of Neo-Confucianism, but whether from the perspective of the richness of the whole of Neo-Confucianism or from the perspective of the multiple levels of the influence of Neo-Confucianism on later ages, one needs to recognize also the comprehensive cultural aspects of Neo-Confucianism. More specifically, Neo-Confucianism is an organic whole that encompasses philosophy, natural science, history, economics, literature, ethics, political theory, education, religious sacrificial rites, and decorum, and its influence has permeated many aspects of early-modern Chinese and East Asian history and social life.² Taking Neo-Confucianism as a comprehensive cultural whole as his point of departure, Prof. Azuma made Zhu Xi’s thought on decorum the focus of his research. Bearing the greatest weight in the historical practice of Confucian thought was the notion of decorum 禮 as the external manifestation of humanity 仁 and as the form of heavenly principle 天理之節文. In the same way, Zhu Xi’s thought on decorum is the most faithful manifestation of Zhu Xi’s thought in practice and in institutions. Among Zhu Xi’s many studies of

2 This view of Prof. Azuma’s is found in his essay “Zhu Xi and the Reform of Confucian Rites” 朱熹と積奠儀礼改革, in 朱子学と近世・近代の東アジア (Neo-Confucianism and Early-Modern and Modern East Asia), edited by Inoue Katsuhito 井上克人, Huang Junjie 黄俊傑, and Tao Demin 陶徳民 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan Daxue Chuban Zhongxin, 2012), pp. 139–154.

decorum, the work most widely disseminated and having the greatest influence on later ages was without doubt his *Family Rituals*.

Regarding *Family Rituals* as “an epochal work,”³ Prof. Azuma believes, “The appearance of *Family Rituals* was a great event in early-modern Chinese intellectual history, and its influence was in no way inferior to [Zhu Xi’s] *Sishu jizhu* 四書集注 (Collected Annotations on the Four Books).”⁴ There were three reasons for this. First, compared to his *Etiquette and Rites* 儀禮, a representative classic in the decorum literature, *Family Rituals* was an entirely new classic in the literature on decorum in China in the early-modern period (from the Song to Qing dynasties). Second, *Family Rituals* broke through the traditional notion that “decorum does not extend down to commoners” (*Book of Rites* 禮記, “Summary of the Rules of Propriety” 曲禮, part 1). It thus let Confucian notions of decorum enter the lives of commoners so that both gentleman and commoner might realize such norms. This truly reflected the egalitarianism of Neo-Confucianism noted in the assertion “Anyone can be a sage.” Third, as a result of the universal spread and influence of Neo-Confucianism throughout early-modern East Asia, the influence of *Family Rituals* extended beyond China’s borders to the rest of East Asia, principally Japan and Korea. Moreover, decorum became the central criterion for distinguishing the civilized from the barbarian.

This book is thus a collection of Prof. Azuma’s studies of *Family Rituals*. It is divided into two parts. The first part contains research essays, and the second part contains studies of the historical literature. But in terms of content, the book in fact covers three stages of the research. The first stage is a systematic ordering of previous studies of *Family Rituals*. Chapter 1 falls under this stage. The second stage is a textual study of *Family Rituals*. This stage includes the discussion of the printings and editions of *Family Rituals* in chapter 3 and the comparison of different versions of *Family Rituals* in part 2, chapter 8. The third stage covers monographs on *Family Rituals*. This stage includes Prof. Azuma’s explanation of the overall situation concerning the study of decorum in Tokugawa Japan, as discerned by means of bibliographic methods, in chapter 2. It also includes his detailed discussions of such key components of the decorum of *Family Rituals* as family shrines in chapter 4, memorial tablets in chapters 5 and 6, and formal *shenyi* robes in chapter 7. In contrast to studies of *Family Rituals* as a classic or as a document in the history of decorum, Prof. Azuma, in his study of *Family Rituals*, remains focused on *Family Rituals* as a development of Neo-Confucianism. Hence, below, in addition to introducing the main features of the chapters of the

3 Azuma Jūji, 朱熹《家礼》实证研究, Preface to the Chinese edition, p. 1.

4 Azuma Jūji, 朱熹《家礼》实证研究, p. 75.

present work, I will attempt to point out the immediate explanatory value that these features have for the study of Neo-Confucianism.

II

Chapter 1 of the present work is “The Present State of, and Topics in, the Study of Confucian Rites, with a Focus on *Family Rituals*” 儒教儀礼研究の現状と課題 ——『家礼』を中心に. *Jyukyō* 儒教 is the term that Japanese Sinologists use to designate Confucianism. The character *kyō* 教 indicates that Confucianism is a system of education consisting of thought and training. In this chapter, Prof. Azuma not only discusses the relationship between premodern Chinese rites and Confucianism. He also examines, in detail and up to the present, some central research topics concerning Chinese Confucian rites, especially topics related to *Family Rituals*. For example, he examines “the issue of the identity of the author of *Family Rituals*,” “the connection between *Family Rituals* and *Letters and Ceremonies* 書儀, by Sima Guang 司馬光,” “the spread and elaboration of *Family Rituals* in East Asia,” and “family problems concerning funeral rites and sacrifices to ancestors.” Also worth mentioning is the appended “List of Research Literature on *Family Rituals*.” This list records nearly all the modern studies of *Family Rituals* by scholars from all over the world, and it also organizes them by category. One cannot help but admire the extensive collection of works in this list and the industry of the author. One can say that one of the greatest features of Prof. Azuma’s research methods is the importance he attaches to previous studies. This not only helps one to have an overall understanding of the research history. Even more important, the author can consciously place his own research in the research tradition and thus establish a dialog with previous studies. Through dialog, we can continuously discover new issues and new areas of study, and thus can continuously advance our research. The other research essays in this collection all make use of this methodology to establish their points and make their advances.

III

Chapter 3, “Printings and Editions of Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals* up to the *Great Compendium on Human Nature and Principle*” 『家礼』の刊刻と版本: 『性理大全』まで, and chapter 8, “A Critical Version of *Family Rituals*” 校勘本『家礼』, are basically textual studies of *Family Rituals*. As the title of the present work advertises, another special feature of Prof. Azuma’s method of research is his textual criticism. As he sees matters, whether we concern ourselves with thought or institutions, in carrying out a critical study of its history, we have to rely on the written literature. Hence, for a study of *Family Rituals*, the primary task is to determine an authentic text of *Family Rituals*

through textual criticism. In this regard, Prof. Azuma has made three contributions.

First, he has thoroughly clarified the routes of transmission of *Family Rituals* and on this basis has determined the Southern Song Zhou text to be the most authentic. Moreover, after determining the particulars of the transmitted texts, he has carried out an exhaustive critical study of the Song text. In chapter 8 he presents to scholars his final results, a reliable critical version of *Family Rituals*.

Second, he has resolved the controversy over the identity of the author of *Family Rituals*, providing us with the reliable conclusion that Zhu Xi had not finalized the text of *Family Rituals*. Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* had been regarded as a forgery since Wang Maohong 王懋竑 (1668–1741) first made this assertion. After the compilers of the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature 四庫全書 acceded to this view, it approached the status of received opinion. More recently, scholars such as Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), Ueyama Shunpei 上山春平 (b. 1921), and Chen Lai 陳來 (b. 1952) have all had serious doubts about this position. Prof. Azuma, building on previous research, studied the various editions of *Family Rituals* and ancillary materials, especially prefaces and afterwords, and has provided us with strong evidence against the forgery theory. As he points out, soon after Zhu Xi passed away, there appeared several editions of *Family Rituals*, including the Wuyang edition 五羊本, the Yuhang edition 余杭本, and the Yanzhou edition 嚴洲本. And the individuals closely connected with these editions—Chen Chun 陳淳, Huang Gan 黃榦, Liao Mingde 廖明德, and Yang Fu 楊復—were all direct disciples of Zhu Xi. Moreover, in the prefaces and afterwords that they wrote, they all regarded *Family Rituals* as Zhu Xi's work, and they all expressed the greatest admiration of this work. If *Family Rituals* were really a forgery produced by someone else, this state of affairs certainly would not be the case. Wang Maohong thought that the prefaces of *Family Rituals* were also forgeries. Wang's view is directly disproved by the preface in Zhu Xi's own handwriting to a reprint of the Song edition of *Family Rituals*, *by the Late Zhu Xi, Illustrated and Annotated* 纂圖集注文公家禮. On Wang's assertion that *Family Rituals* contains inconsistencies, Prof. Azuma accurately notes that this was because when *Family Rituals* was published, it was still in draft form and had not been finalized. It was a work that Chen Chun called “an unfinished code of ritual” (*Family Rituals, with an Afterword for Chen Xian* 代陳憲跋家禮) and that Huang Gan said Zhu Xi “did not have time to revise” (*A Brief Life of Zhu Xi* 朱子行狀). Hence we cannot take these inconsistencies as evidence that the work is a forgery.

Third, Prof. Azuma's purpose in ordering the history of the editions of *Family Rituals* was not only to clarify the lineages of the editions, but also to

build on this foundation in order to look at how *Family Rituals* spread through, and had an effect on, early-modern Chinese society. This research strategy of the author's gives us a glimpse of the true concerns lying behind his evidentiary methodology. For example, among the printings during the Yuan dynasty, the author lists the Yao Shu 姚樞 edition of *Family Rituals*. In 1235 the Yuan army captured the Dean border region in present-day Hubei. After Yao Shu, who was following the army, saved Zhao Fu, also known as Mr. Jianghan, the latter "gave him all manner of Neo-Confucian books by the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi." This famous story is an indication that the dissemination of Neo-Confucianism began in the North. After Yao Shu retired to Mt. Sumen in Huizhou (present-day Henan province), he printed, together with some books on Daoism, Zhu Xi's *Elementary Learning* 小學書, *Questions and Answers on the Mengzi* 論孟或問, and *Family Rituals*. This shows that *Family Rituals* must have been included in the books that Zhao Fu gave to Yao Shu. But more important, we can infer that from the beginning when Neo-Confucianism spread to the North, *Family Rituals* was an important part of that doctrine. Worth noting is that Prof. Azuma not only showed that *Family Rituals* gained the attention of both the elite and commoners. He also pointed out that since the section on marriage etiquette in the Yuan legal code 元典章, that is, the imperial edict promulgated by the court in 1264, clearly stipulates that marriage etiquette must follow the norms of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* 朱文公家禮, this work must have already entered the national norms of etiquette from the beginning of the Yuan dynasty. This, without doubt, is another important way in which Neo-Confucianism entered the national legal code, second only to the well-known institution of Zhu Xi's *Collected Commentary on the Four Books* 四書集注 as the standard for selecting candidates through the civil-service examinations early in the reign of Emperor Renzong (r. 1311–1320) of the Yuan dynasty. A related issue is Prof. Azuma's examination of the Ming work *Great Compendium on Human Nature and Principle* 性理大全. The source of many annotated editions of *Family Rituals* published in Korea and Japan was the version found in the *Great Compendium*. Hence, the *Great Compendium* version can be called the version authorized for popularization, in Prof. Azuma's view. But the significance of this version does not stop there. Prof. Azuma notes that the inclusion of *Family Rituals* in the *Great Compendium* by the imperially commissioned editors Hu Guang 胡廣 et al. indicates that a version of *Family Rituals* was now officially recognized and formally approved. Moreover, according to the "Norms of Etiquette" 禮制 chapter of the *History of the Ming* 明史, the norms of *Family Rituals* were formally decreed for use by the entire nation during the Yongle period (1403–1424). Prof. Azuma thinks that the version of *Family Rituals* decreed for public use was the rewritten version that appeared in the

Great Compendium. Thus, *Family Rituals*, a work produced by a private-sector Neo-Confucian school of philosophy, garnered official recognition, and then, conversely, was promoted in the private sector by the government.

IV

From the above, particularly Prof. Azuma's third contribution in section 3, we can see that his interest in the literature, spurred by his evidentiary methodology, seeks to go beyond the literature. Behind his extensive gathering and minute examination of the literature lies an interest in weighty issues in the history of scholarship and the history of ideas. In other words, while he pursues his evidentiary methodology by first examining the literature, throughout the process he has a clear perception of the issues. This feature of Prof. Azuma's research also appears in every part of his study of *Family Rituals*.

Chapter 2, "A Study of Confucian Decorum during the Edo Period" 江戸時代における儒教儀礼研究: 書誌を中心に, is an examination, based on the literature, of the reception of the three ritual classics (the *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, *Etiquette and Rites* 儀禮, and the *Book of Rites* 禮記) and *Family Rituals* in the Edo period (1603–1867). Previously, Japanese scholars harbored the preconceived notion that the study of ritual exerted only an intellectual influence in early-modern Japan, that as a studied and lectured-on set of ideas, it had no practical influence on people's actual lives. But as Prof. Azuma points out on the basis of his ordering of Edo-period works on ritual, in the latter half of the seventeenth century there arose an interest in *Family Rituals*. This interest found expression not only in works on *Family Rituals* by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming scholars, but also in the actual funeral and memorial rites of scholars and politicians, such as Hayashi Razan 林羅山, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀, and Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政, who carried out these rites in accord with *Family Rituals*. This revelation of the extensive historical use of *Family Rituals* in funeral and memorial rites not only corrected previous widespread preconceptions, but also highlighted the unique features of the Japanese reception of Confucian rites in comparison with China and Korea, which also witnessed the widespread adoption of the Confucian capping, marriage, funeral, and memorial rites found in *Family Rituals*.

Chapters 4 through 7 examine some central elements of the norms of etiquette in *Family Rituals*. Below I will use the discussion of family temples in chapter 4 as an example to explicate the special features of Prof. Azuma's research mentioned above.

In chapter 4, "Song Family Temples and Ancestor Worship" 宋代の家廟と祖先祭祀, "family temple" 家廟, an installation for venerating the souls of a clan's ancestors, is a general term encompassing ancestral-portrait halls 影堂,

memorial-service halls 祭堂, and ancestral halls 祠堂. In other words, family temples (or ancestral halls) are places for carrying out memorial rites. Book 1 of *Family Rituals*, “Common Etiquette,” begins with a discussion of ancestral halls, beneath which, in small print, is a note by Zhu Xi that says, “This chapter was originally in the part titled ‘Memorial Rites.’ Now to return to beginnings, respect the ancestors, and truly have a clear division of roles in the family, I begin this project by informing readers of the original intention. Hence, I rewrote this chapter specifically to begin this part.” From this quote, one can see that Zhu Xi, in his vision for *Family Rituals*, gave ancestral halls pride of place. Obviously, in this study Prof. Azuma also takes family temples (or ancestral halls) as primal. By the research of this chapter, Prof. Azuma seeks to show the historical evolution of the Song system of family temples. By examining the system of family temples before and after Zhu Xi, one can see the gains and losses attributable to his proposals for family temples, and their historical significance. Prof. Azuma notes that a feature of the system of family temples in the ancient ritual literature, such as the *Book of Rites*, was that only those of a certain status and rank could build family temples, the right to build a family temple being a prerogative of high officials. In this system, if the descendants lost an ancestor’s official rank, they might also lose the right to build a family temple. Up to the Tang dynasty, a powerful aristocracy could carry out a system of family temples, but in the Song dynasty, which limited official ranks to one generation, the system of family temples became an empty form unsuited to the times. This caused the national norms of etiquette surrounding the family-temple system to atrophy during the Song period. In response, Neo-Confucian scholars such as Han Qi 韓琦, Sima Guang 司馬光, Zhang Zai 張載, Cheng Yi 程頤, and Lü Dafang 呂大防 began exploring new norms. Especially worthy of our attention are Cheng Yi’s views, which can be summarized as follows: First, all scholar-gentlemen ought to have family temples. Second, one may make use of gods that formerly only high officials could use. Third, as stipulated in the norms for morning apparel in *Etiquette and Rites*, those perpetually memorialized in the family temple cannot be further back than the great-great-grandfather, four generations back. Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals* took over Cheng Yi’s proposal and institutionalized it. Thus, the efforts of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi resulted in a reform of ritual in a certain sense, and through this reform, family temples were transformed from the exclusive province of the aristocracy to a common institution of the scholar-gentleman. From this discussion we can see that Prof. Azuma has not only discovered a previously unnoticed connection between the thought of Cheng Yi and that of Zhu Xi, namely, Zhu Xi’s use of Cheng Yi’s ideas in his proposed system of family temples. He has also pointed out the political and social changes driving the historical reform of the

family-temple system. Even if we regard the demand that the scholar-gentleman have a family temple, an idea that *Family Rituals* takes over from Cheng Yi, as an equalizing trend in the thought of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, we must also not overlook the objective political and social changes occurring in the historical background that produced *Family Rituals*. At this point we can ask, Since political and social changes had already made it difficult to promote a system of family temples, why were the Neo-Confucians so anxious to reform the system of family temples? In addition to the reason given by Zhu Xi in the note quoted above, Prof. Azuma notes that the establishment of family temples caused the site for venerating ancestors to move from the memorial temple to the family temple. A memorial temple 墓祠, common in the Song period, was an ancestral temple placed at the side of a grave. In those days, such graves, called grave temples 坟寺 or grave cells 坟庵, were usually taken care of by Buddhist temples. All such installations can be considered memorial temples. There were also cases of Daoist temples looking after graves and of ancestral halls built within the confines of Daoist temples. Thus, in terms of both the care of installations and the performance of rituals, Buddhism and Daoism bore a considerable responsibility for private-sector veneration of the dead. Hence, transferring the veneration of ancestors from memorial temples to family temples in fact meant transferring this important social rite from Buddhist or Daoist forms to Confucian forms.

Prof. Azuma also discusses, in chapters 5 and 6, the issue of memorial tablets 木主, the most important ritual implement in the family temple. And in chapter 7 he discusses formal *shenyi* robes 深衣, the Confucian vestments discussed in *Family Rituals*. As before, Prof. Azuma pursues these two research topics by ordering the literature in detail, and on this basis produces seminal views overturning the theses of previous researchers. Owing to limitations of space, I cannot go into detail. Suffice it to say that in his treatment of memorial tablets and *shenyi* robes, two key topics of *Family Rituals*, we can see even more clearly how he pursues his research with an unwavering focus on cultural interaction in East Asia. For example, in his study of memorial tablets, Prof. Azuma examines their influence on not only China but also Japan, Okinawa, and Korea. And in his study of *shenyi* robes, he discusses practices in Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan. One can thus say that the author, as his basic slant for this work, consistently approaches Neo-Confucianism from the perspective of cultural interaction in East Asia.

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Review of *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*, by Francis Fukuyama. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2011.

I

In *The Origins of Political Order*, Francis Fukuyama provides a lucid historical account of the development of political order in human societies, from a strongly synthetic perspective. The bulk of nearly 600 pages represents only a half of his project. A second volume will deal with the period from the nineteenth century, in which, Fukuyama claims, conditions for the formation of human political institutions have undergone fundamental changes. As indicated repeatedly, this book was inspired by Samuel Huntington's 1968 work *Political Order in Changing Societies*, which Fukuyama believes must be supplemented with a historical investigation of how the modern polity developed. (Huntington's analysis of the problems faced by contemporary developing countries in modernizing their political systems, according to Fukuyama, takes for granted the existence and exemplary role of such institutions as the state and political parties.) By this investigation, Fukuyama expects to reveal the historical contingencies of state formation in different societies and to examine in a historical light the causes of diverse failed attempts to build a modern state.

At this point Fukuyama's philosophy of political development becomes apparent. He lays particular emphasis on the idea of contingency, mainly to ward off accusations of historical teleology concerning the emergence of, or global convergence toward, the modern Western political establishment. However, he also argues that once the three key institutions—the state, the rule of law, and government accountability—took shape, fortuitously combined together, and stood the test of time, they became imitable and indeed desirable for non-Western nations, although the degree of success in transplanting institutions is, again, historically conditioned. Thus, in this ambitious work, history assumes a strategic character. To wit, resorting to historical circumstances endows the narrative of the development of the political order with complexity. Nonetheless, replacing a linear view of history with a circumstantial, contingent one does not assume historical relativity. Theoretically, Fukuyama regards a well-balanced combination of these three institutional factors to be the key to sustainable political success, as well as a guarantee of both state power and social welfare. Indeed, at the end of this volume, Fukuyama attributes the chronic dysfunction of democracy in the United States, the European Union, Japan, and India to different degrees of mutual alienation among the state, the rule of law, and accountable govern-

ment. According to Fukuyama, this historical investigation serves to reconfirm the superiority of these institutions emerging out of contingencies, even though their necessity and rationality in an even larger historical perspective is not obviously in question. Little wonder that this standpoint, ahistorical to a certain degree, reminds some reviewers of Fukuyama's Western-centric, end-of-history conceit, revealed in his previous works. The author's erudition and organizing power warrant a thorough reading of this thought-provoking book, yet its historical argument needs a critical review from the stance of historical studies in general and historical thinking in particular.

II

"The purpose of this book is less to present a history of political development than to analyze some of the factors that led to the emergence of certain key political institutions" (p. 22). "What I am aiming for in this book is a middle-range theory that avoids the pitfalls both of excessive abstraction (the vice of economists) and excessive particularism (the problem of many historians and anthropologists). I am hoping to recover something of the lost tradition of nineteenth-century historical sociology or comparative anthropology" (p. 24). These statements well specify the purpose and methodology of the project, in which Fukuyama takes on a nineteenth-century style of grand narrative that does not shy away from extensive comparisons and generalizations.

To begin with, Fukuyama supports the inevitability of the development of the human political order on biological grounds. Part 1 of the book, "Before the State," expounds on the necessity of politics and the formation of early human political organizations. After a broad survey of works on biology, psychology, and anthropology, Fukuyama comes to the conclusion that group orientation, construction of a mental model of causality, rule following driven more by emotion than by reason, and the desire for recognition constitute natural building blocks for us to construct a theory of political development. On this basis he sets out to delineate the four successive stages of political development: "For bands and tribes, social organization is based on kinship, and these societies are relatively egalitarian. Chiefdoms and states, by contrast, are organized hierarchically and exert authority on a territorial rather than a kinship basis" (p. 53). Evidence shows that the four types of human society can coexist, but the direction of evolution is unmistakable. Kinship organizations are an outgrowth of human nature, Fukuyama argues, since one of its biological building blocks, group orientation, promotes kin selection and reciprocal altruism. Though tribes are complex in nature, their decentralized structure and lack of clear rules of succession impose limitations on the solidification and expansion of tribal societies. Fukuyama does

not really discuss the structure of chiefdoms, but the crucial step out of the tribal stage is the effort of political agents to detach themselves from kinship influence and favor functionality. Here we enter the domain of impersonal political mechanisms that seek to maximize efficacy in the group's dealings—an achievement that heralds the birth of the first key institution of the modern political order, the state.

Fukuyama challenges the notion of Western centrism not only by arguing that modern political institutions arose from historical contingencies without foreshadowing the inevitable rise of the West, but also by claiming that China had the first organized state. Following Max Weber's definition of the state as "an organization deploying a legitimate monopoly of violence over a defined territory" and Weber's criteria for modern states as "subject to a rational division of labor, based on technical specialization and expertise, and impersonal both with regard to recruitment and their authority over citizens," Fukuyama finds the first appearance of mature state apparatuses in ancient China when independent states under the nominal dominance of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE) strove to annex each other and usurp the authority of the Zhou kings. With the unification of China under the Qin dynasty in 221 BCE and critical revisions of the imperial system carried out by the succeeding Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), China came to be "the first civilization to invent the modern state" (p. 78). (Intellectually uneasy about this claim, I will return to it in the third section.) Yet as the formation the Chinese state was driven solely by war, other key institutions and societal forces were not in place to check sovereign power. Hence, imperial China was cyclically plagued by bad emperors who abused their centralized power or failed to exert it at all, personally contributing to political decay.

In part 2 of the book, "State Building," Fukuyama discusses India and the Islamic world along with China. Indian history presents a sharp contrast to Chinese political development. On the one hand, the frequency of warfare characterizing pre-Qin China found no counterpart in ancient India, which accordingly was not incentivized to make a strong, centralized state. On the other hand, Hinduism provided Indian society with a sense of providence, a sense that laws are more elevated than secular decrees, which thus formed a rudimentary framework for the rule of law. However, Hindu's introduction of the rigid caste systems of *varna* and *jati* virtually frustrated any attempts to bring the whole subcontinent under a powerful regime, with the result that India suffered repeated external invasions and rule by foreign powers. Even to the present day, Indian democracy still lacks a state with the ability to exert authoritarian power.

The Islamic world constitutes another major reference for comparison with the West. As faith was the binding force for political cohesion in the

Islamic world, the rule of law was not absent, at least theoretically, in the Islamic political tradition. To prevent kinship influence in states, there emerged in successive Islamic regimes a system of cultivating slave civilian and military staff, who were cut from their families and native cultures and educated in an elitist style to furnish states with outstanding bureaucrats and soldiers. The system, called Mamluk, was strictly nonhereditary at the beginning, but the biological nature of human beings made such rule unsustainable, and there were no effective social forces to hold the increasingly entrenched upper classes of such states accountable. Hence, the decline of this peculiar recruitment system led to the decline of Islamic empires. From China to the Islamic world, Fukuyama accumulates sufficient examples to argue for the importance of the coexistence of the three institutions—the state, the rule of law, and accountable government—which Western Europe came to possess in the course of modern history.

Parts 3 and 4 of the book, “The Rule of Law” and “Accountable Government,” are dedicated mainly to the rise of these two key institutions and their coming together in the West. The Catholic Church played a significant role in preserving a social space exempt from excessive state intervention. With its hierarchical structure and well-defined clerical and lay functions, the Catholic Church also provided a model of the rule of law for emerging European states to emulate. In contrast, the Orthodox Church of the Byzantine Empire never evolved out of a caesaropapist type of authoritarianism in which the law was invariably subjugated to the state. Further comparison reveals that while traditional China never saw the emergence of a rule of law, with such moral notions as the Heavenly Mandate being the sole check on imperial power, Indian rule of law existed only in primitive forms, and the rule of law in the Islamic world was more symbolic than real.

In presenting the formation of accountable government, Fukuyama breaks the topic into the British, French/Spanish, Hungarian, and Russian cases, explaining how the different configurations of political actors decided governmental accountability and thus stability of individual political systems. “The amount of resistance to state centralization depended on the degree to which the three groups outside the state—nobility, gentry, and Third Estate [consisting of tradesmen, merchants, free serfs, and other town and city dwellers]—were able to work together to resist royal power. It also depended on the internal cohesion that each one demonstrated. And finally, it depended on the cohesion and sense of purpose of the state itself” (p. 333). In addition, despite their great number, peasants were historically too scattered to form any durable political bodies to claim self-interests. While it is impossible to wade into the historical details of the aforementioned cases, only in England did the balance of power help the country to thrive, and the superiority of its

institutions became all the more conspicuous after the Industrial Revolution. In France, political forces other than the state were too fragmented to resist being co-opted by the latter. This political collusion placed an unbearable burden on the peasantry—a predicament eradicated only through the French Revolution. In Hungary, nobility and gentry formed a strong coalition that paralyzed the state and accelerated its demise. In Russia, all political forces were rigorously subjugated to the state in a perfect absolutism.

III

Fukuyama deals with so many Western countries to avoid the pitfall of Whig history, which entertains the progressive view that the Western political tradition arose in Greek and Roman times, was codified in the Magna Carta, then was firmly established by the Glorious Revolution, and with the expansion of the British Empire, was spread to the rest of the world. Instead of this view, Fukuyama insists that British political success arose contingently. None of its liberal tradition, concentration of social forces through feudalism, or widespread practice of customary laws was predestined. Nevertheless, it can easily be observed that Fukuyama's theory of political order is approaching an end not unlike that of the Whig view: the British political system at its prime speaks for its own legitimacy; it hardly needs further justification. For Fukuyama, the well-balanced political mechanism that happened to mature in the West, especially in England—that is, the interdependent yet mutually autonomous institutions of the state, the rule of law, and accountable government—guarantees a sustainable political order. Indeed, in part 5 of the book, "Toward a Theory of Political Development," different combinations of the three institutions are examined to explain the success or failure of various regimes worldwide.

Obviously, Fukuyama's account is deeply rooted in international anarchy—the notion that the state is not only the unit of political action but also the end of political development. Of course, Fukuyama's realist theory construction is admirable, whose state-centric perspective relies heavily on reference to biology, which tells us that the tendency toward violence and competition is no less embedded in human nature than the tendency toward cooperation. Nonetheless, his deliberate detachment from Western centrism cannot be fully successful if modern Western institutions—rather young in human history without having sufficiently stood the test of time—are enthroned as the ultimate form of human political organization. (Fukuyama does not make this claim, of course, but his theory, while allowing reconfiguration, allows for no improvement of the key institutions.) Furthermore, resort to biology also obliges Fukuyama to compare biological and political evolution (pp. 446–449)—a project that would benefit from greater nuance and

more historical insights.

Thus, in a sense, this book is more typological than historical. It can be claimed to be historical in its delineation of the political development of each selected tradition. Yet throughout the book that historical account is spun around crystallized notions of the state, the rule of law, and accountable government, and shortcomings of their development in different regions are indicated with purposeful comparison with their later maturation and even consummation in the West. More important, Fukuyama deals with each tradition mainly in isolation, although he is aware that intensive interaction and mutual influence occurred between civilizations. In his rather fragmentary treatment, however, he frequently and freely draws analogies between situations in different contexts, a method that calls for extreme caution in historical studies, and he often directs such analogies at the differences between Western and non-Western political developments.

Under this circumstance, the claim that China had the first organized state hardly amounts to anything more than a slogan that, paradoxically, betrays the difficulty of departing from Western centrism. Fukuyama claims, “China was the first civilization to invent the *modern state*” (my italics). This obviously achronological statement can only be understood in a typological rather than historical sense. That is, the modern state can find a prototype in ancient China (not an origin in a strict sense, as a historical relationship has not been established). Likewise, India and the Islamic world are drawn into the narrative with the same typological logic: the historical intricacies of these civilizations being largely omitted in favor of the modern West as the centerpiece of comparative political development. Besides, some historical actualities presented in the book need reconsideration. For example, Fukuyama oversimplifies in portraying Empress Wu (Wu Zetian, 623–705) of China as purely evil, and he is not precise in describing modern China (prior to World War II) as a colony.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Fukuyama classifies civilizations—China, India, the Islamic world, Russia as approaching the West, and Latin America as derived from the West—in a style similar to that of Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations*. While such classification is not intrinsically wrong, this treatment is problematic in at least two aspects. First, minor traditions are simply invisible in this picture. Second, the diversity only of the West receives Fukuyama’s attention, with the inner variations of other civilizations being ignored. Indeed, any comparative work of such a vast temporal and spatial scope will bog down if too many historical details are required, but a more balanced treatment of civilizations is certainly desirable.

Fukuyama makes an interesting observation: “One of dynastic China’s great legacies, then, is high-quality authoritarian government. It is no accident

that virtually all of the world's successful authoritarian modernizers, including South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and modern China itself, are East Asian countries sharing a common Chinese cultural heritage" (p. 313). Following this clue, one may be prompted to ask, given that the state, the rule of law, and accountable government are cornerstone institutions, can countries with different traditions achieve a good political order with different proportions of these institutions, or is there a golden ratio that they have to approximate, as exemplified by certain Western paradigm countries?

Finally, it is reasonable to ask whether the state, the rule of law, and accountable government furnish all that is necessary for a good political order. Based on human biology, which features both reciprocal cooperation and violent competition, Fukuyama's ideal political world is characterized by a balance of institutional powers. Ideas are extremely important in making political systems, as he fully admits. How can cultural, ideological, psychological, and moral factors help to define, refine, or even transcend this mechanism of mutual checks? This is an issue worthy of more in-depth study.

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Review of *Qingmo Zhongri jiaoyu wenhua jiaoliu zhi yanjiu* (Research on Educational and Cultural Interaction between China and Japan during the Late Qing Era). By Lu Shunchang. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2012. (清末中日教育文化交流之研究/吕顺著. 北京: 商务印书馆, 2012. RMB 32.00元, 401.)

The historiography of Asian connections through the study of pre-colonial and early modern maritime trade is longstanding, but academic interest in Asian connections of the modern period is recent. In Prasenjit Duara's words, this new interest is "unable to grasp the continuities and discontinuities that form the present."¹

1 Prasenjit Duara, "Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for Our Times," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69, 4 (2010): 963.

The emergence of Sino-Japanese history as a sub-field of this burgeoning interest in Asian connections owes much to the work of Hamashita Takeshi, Benjamin Elman, Joshua Fogel, Akira Iriye, and Gilbert Rozman, who have analyzed the histories of China, Japan, and Korea (as well as lost polities such as the Ryūkyū Kingdom; see Hamashita) in detail. These scholars have also mapped out the contours of interactions and similarities between different groups and individuals in the East Asian region. Scholars in China and Taiwan, such as Kan Huai-chen, Kao Ming-shih, Wang Hui, and Zhang Feng have also contributed studies that deepen our understanding of the East Asian region in general and Sino-Japanese interactions in particular. Moving beyond diplomatic and economic relations, these scholars have begun in recent years to take a fresh approach to Sino-Japanese history by examining the cultural and intellectual relationships between the Chinese and Japanese literati of the modern period.

Taking the late Qing period as his point of departure, Lu Shunchang scrutinizes the various encounters and perceptions of Qing literati and students who studied in Japan, as well as how the Japanese perceived their education of the Chinese students. Lu posits that Chinese had always imagined cultural similarities between China and Japan, and that the ignominious Chinese defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) reversed the cultural role of China as patron to that of client of a modern Japan, which had long been a recipient of Chinese culture. Instead of learning from the West, the Chinese now explored the option of learning from Japan, a country that they had regarded as a culturally and politically inferior client state. Sino-Japanese interactions of the late Qing reached another peak after their inception during the Sui-Tang period. Lu's main argument is that Chinese students saw Meiji Japan as a model for Qing China and perceived Japan as a mediator between China and the West.

In particular, Lu discusses Zhejiang students in Japan, whom he views as late Qing pioneers of New Learning and interlocutors of Western knowledge and modern science. By emphasizing the cultural and geographical advantages of Zhejiang Province, Lu explains how the influence of Japan on modern Chinese education became more profound through the transmission of New Learning by Zhejiang students and literati.

Using Japanese newspapers and magazines as his main primary sources, Li postulates that the enthusiasm and support of Japanese politicians for the Western education of Chinese students was the result of a national ambition to engender a sense of goodwill in Chinese students and hence seek future economic benefits and political concessions in China. This explains why, according to Lu, despite an initial interest in acquiring Western learning through their studies in Japan, the Chinese grew suspicious of Japanese

intentions and finally hostile to Japan as political developments unfolded.

The analytical lens that Lu uses is education; he explicates in detail how Chinese study groups consisting of court officials and provincial literati remained interested in acquiring rare classics that had been lost in China. He also discusses how they keenly observed and adopted the Japanese school system and curriculum at all academic levels, from elementary school to tertiary institutions. From a close reading of private letters and official documents of Chinese observers and students in Japan, such as Wu Qingdi, Zhang Dayong, and Cheng Enpei, Lu shows how the Chinese literati were impressed by Japanese determination and efforts at modernization through reformative education. Further, Fan's *The World of Education*, an academic journal whose editors translated Japanese articles for Chinese readership, was one of several initiatives of the Zhejiang literati to expound the virtues of modern Japanese/Western education. Zhejiang students in Japan published *The Official Paper* (*Guan-bao*), an official newsletter that records both the operations and reports of the Qing Student Supervision Department in Tokyo, as well as the paperwork and routines of Chinese students in Japan, who were usually supported by Qing funding and scholarships. To further illustrate the prominence of Zhejiang students in Japan in future cultural and political developments in modern China, Lu highlights the impact of renowned personalities such as Lu Xun, Chiang Kai-shek, Jiang Baili, Qiu Jin, and Zhang Zongxiang—Zhejiang natives who had received at least part of their education in Japan. According to Lu, the educational background of these Zhejiang natives explains why some students were ambivalent toward Japan while others were cynical about Japanese motives.

The book under review succeeds in its narrative of Sino-Japanese interactions on several counts. First, the book is a useful and welcome addition to an important area of inquiry in East Asian history: education. Chinese, English, and Japanese scholarship lacks a systematic analysis of education and exchanges on education between China and Japan other than the common tenet of mutual cultural borrowings and influence, and especially lacks an in-depth analysis of Japanese-influenced education in modern China. Second, the book provides an engaging and readable account of how Qing Chinese steered the direction of their modern learning from the West to Japan, although Lu does not explain how the Chinese appropriated Japanese contextualization of New or Western Learning. Finally, and most importantly, this comprehensive book has linked “the continuities and discontinuities that form the present” with a discussion of how old Chinese classics and learning remained relevant and perhaps even fundamental to the acquisition and implementation of New Learning through the medium of Japan. The book grapples with the question of mutual perceptions of China and Japan, elabo-

rating on why the Chinese saw the Japanese as both benefactors and malefactors, as well as on how the current Chinese perception of Japan as a malicious neighbor has its origins in the cultural and educational interactions between China and Japan during the late Qing period.

As a lay reader, however, I am not convinced of the book's claim that Zhejiang's liberated culture and geographical proximity to Japan were the main reasons why Zhejiang students, not those from other parts of the nation, had spearheaded New Learning and major socio-cultural changes in modern China. The gentry and literati of other parts of China, most notably Guangdong Province, also contributed in significant ways to the political and social changes that swept modern China. A comparison and discussion of such contributions warrants a separate analysis that this review cannot cover in detail, however. More significantly, the book repeats the longstanding claim of many Chinese scholars that Qing China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War demonstrates the failure of the Foreign Affairs Movement to introduce Western science and technology; according to these scholars, the failure necessitated more radical cultural and educational changes after the war in order to follow Japan's lead in modernizing and coping with foreign imperialism. However, Benjamin Elman rightly points out that such a narrative is misleading because it forgets and represses earlier adaptations of new scientific and technological learning.² Education in Qing China had witnessed certain changes due to the influence of Catholic Jesuits, Protestant missionaries, and Western advisers prior to the war. Finally, the book does not connect Chinese educational reforms with the abolition of the civil service examination in 1905, ignoring the role of these reforms as key to both the "New Governance" policies of late Qing China and the new Ministry of Education's preference for science education and textbooks based on the Japanese scientific system.³ The inclusion of this point would have strengthened the book's argument that Japan was the main mediator between the West and Chinese literati and officials during the late Qing period, having replaced the Christian missionaries and Western advisers in this role. Another interesting point that the book could have raised was the promulgation of government schools and implementation of state curricula in late Qing China, which the imperial state had never attempted before; prior to the late Qing period, the state had left the provision of education largely in the hands of affluent households, monasteries, temples, and private academies.

2 Benjamin A. Elman, "Naval Warfare and the Retraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms into Scientific and Technological Failure, 1865–1895," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, 2 (2004): 285.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 323.

Despite its shortcomings, the book is an eclectic study in its coverage and scope of an often-neglected topic. The book is an important contribution to the syncretic examination of early Meiji Japan's educational system and Chinese perceptions of it in the monumental period of the late Qing. The book could also be read as a commentary on the intermediary role of the Japanese in transmitting Western knowledge to China during this period.

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