

CHINESE REFUGEES IN JAPAN



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CHINESE REFUGEES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY IN JAPAN.[\[1\]](#)

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IT is a trite, but none the less true, saying, that history repeats itself." The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in the fifteenth century scattered the learned men of the East and their learning over the West, and produced throughout Europe a Renaissance, whose vast influence has never yet been accurately measured, and which was undoubtedly one of the chief elements in modern civilization. It was Tartar hordes again, which, about two hundred years later, overthrew the reigning native dynasty of China, and unwittingly produced in the neighboring land of Japan a Renaissance, which led ultimately to the revolution of 1868, and was evidently one of the chief elements in the civilisation of New Japan. For, as the Greek scholars, fleeing from Constantinople, took refuge in various other countries of Europe, likewise many patriotic Chinese scholars fled from their native land and took refuge in Japan. Again, as the fugitive Greek scholars stirred up throughout Western Europe a revival of learning, in like manner the fugitive Chinese scholars aroused in Japan a deeper interest in native and foreign learning. Since, moreover, Mitsukuni (Giko) a grandson of Iyeyasu, and the second Tokugawa Prince of Mito, was a great patron of literature he invited some of these fugitives to Mito. These and others are the subjects of sketches, which, on account of the lack of materials must be brief.

* * *

Shu Shiyu, more popularly known as Shu Shunsui, was born in Sekko (Che-kiang) province in the twenty eighth year of Manreki (of the Chinese year periods), or in 1600 of the Christian era. Both his grandfather and his father were honored officials of the Ming dynasty. In his youth he studied earnestly, and "completely

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digested" the principles of all Chinese philosophy. When he was still young, he had the honor of becoming an "honorary student" of his county. He cherished good political ideas, so that it was expected that he would become a high officer of the government. But, as the power of the central government had already begun to decline, the whole empire was involved in abuses and injustice. Shu Shunsui consequently gave up his intention of entering the Government service, and used to say to his family that, if he should be honored by being made the governor of a province and should become very popular, he would certainly be destroyed by envy. As Caesar chose rather to be chief in a small village than to be second in Rome, so Shu Shunsui was content to be the leader of his village and the central figure of a small circle of friends : because, as he said, "a rose smells more sweetly on a small bush than in a fine garden." Not a few times he received invitations to accept office from the local authorities and from the central Government; but he invariably declined.

Finally, Shu Shunsui, accused as " a disobedient fellow," had to flee by night to the sea shore. Here he embarked in a ship and came to Japan, whence he sailed for Annam. But after a short time he returned to Shusan (Chusan) Island, where there was an army under the command of an officer named Koketsu. This man, in spite of Shu Shunsui's repeated refusals, compelled the latter to fill several important offices. In the fifth year of the (Chinese) period Eiraku [1651] the generals and captains in Chusan became suspicious of each other; and an immense army of Manchurians, having already brought half of the Empire under its sway, was rapidly sweeping down from the north.

Thus once more was Shu Shunsui obliged to leave his native land, and tried to go again to Annam ; but, being prevented, by a storm, he landed at Nagasaki. Though he had disliked to serve in the Government, he could never give up the idea of restoring the declining power of the Ming dynasty. His most intimate friend, with whom he consulted concerning the plan of the restoration, was a brave and loyal general, named Oku, who, with a small army, gained many splendid victories over "the Northern barbarians." Shu Shunsui had come to Japan with the purpose of obtaining aid from the Japanese government, but unfortunately he failed to obtain any assistance. After a little while, the brave General Oku died a captive. The news of this sad event reached Shu Shunsui very late, and was received by him with bitter regret. He did not know the date of his friend's death; but he appointed the

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fifteenth of the eighth month (o. c.) as a memorial day. "From that time till he closed his melancholy life in this remote island, he had no moon festival (*tsukimi*)." That same night of every year, while others were singing gaily, and "drinking in the silvery flood of the autumn moon," he closed his gate, declined to receive guests, and engaged in silent contemplation.

"As the Japanese government was not generous enough to shelter even such a poor fugitive," he was obliged, "though he had lost his way home," to venture to sail back to Chusan. Here, as Prince Rob had made a temporary palace on that island, he fortunately found himself still under the Ming dynasty. The officials of "this miserable government" requested his services: but he declined as before. One day, when he was on board a ship about to sail, he was captured by soldiers of the Shing [Ts'ing] dynasty, who, with drawn swords, threatened to kill him, if he did not swear allegiance. His life was in great danger, and was saved only by his calm attitude, which the Manchurian warriors admired.

The next year he went to Annam by way of Japan, for navigation from China directly to the former country was impossible. In the ninth year of the (Chinese) period Eiraku [1655] Prince Roe) sent to him a special letter of invitation, which "contained words so touching that Shu Shunsui wept on reading it," and at once determined to sail back and serve under the Prince.

But a few days before the date he had chosen for his departure, a new calamity occurred. The King of Annam, wishing to keep and employ Chinese scholars in his country, seized Shu Shunsui, with the purpose of compelling him to write letters and poems. The latter objected on the ground that "his heart was disturbed by anxiety for his country and his family." Notwithstanding this reasonable apology, he was brought into the presence of the King, but refused to bow to the monarch. The latter, very angry, ordered him to be killed, but again Shu Shunsui, by his wonted calmness, gained the

victory. The courtiers and the King discovered that he was not a common man; and, beginning to admire him, spared his life, but still declined to release him. Shu Shunsui, however, wrote a letter, which plainly set forth his misfortunes and his plans, and finally gained for himself permission to leave Annam.

But, as before, direct communication with China was interrupted; so that he had to come to Nagasaki, and thence sailed to the island (Chusan).

Upon his arrival, he discovered, to his bitter disappointment,

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that, during his absence, the island had been captured by the enemy; that his intimate friends, such as Shu Elyu and Go Shoran, were dead, and that there was no more hope of restoration. "He considered it beneath the dignity of a patriot and a loyalist to follow all the fashions and customs of the semi civilised emperor" of the new dynasty. Therefore, in the next year [1656], he came again to Japan, „where he intended to preserve and enjoy the old customs and manners of the conquered dynasty."

There was at that time in the Yanagawa clan a *samurai* named Ando Shuyaku, who, having met Shu Shunsui several times, had become a great admirer of the latter's character. Ando with some friends, petitioned the governor of Nagasaki to allow this learned Chinaman to stay there, and gained the desired permission. The savant, having been a rover for so long a time, had lost a large amount of money, and had no way left for supporting himself. But the generous Ando promised to share with him half his own meagre allowance of only eighty *koku* of rice. Shu Shunsui felt under great obligation to his benefactor, always treated the latter very kindly, and, when Ando, in his leisure came to Nagasaki, gave him good instruction in Chinese, etc. Ando on the other hand, felt so much anxiety for his teacher, that, "whenever there was a high wind or a heavy rain, he sent to ask after Shu Shunsui's welfare."

In 1665 Mitsukuni (Giko) the famous Prince of Mito, sent a messenger to invite Shu Shunsui to come to the East (Kwanto) The latter, who had already heard of the fame of this Prince, willingly accepted the invitation. "He served as a friend, an adviser, a secretary, a father; he worked kindly, loyally, earnestly. Sometimes he discussed history, sometimes philosophy, with the Prince: one day poetry and another. day politics." He wrote an inscription on the large bell, "which, still striking every hour, reminds us [the people of Mito] of him and his master"; also the history of Kochintei, a country seat of the Prince. The latter, on his part, respected the learned man ; treated him with kindness and generosity, and built for him a very cosy residence in Komagome in Yedo. On .Shu Shunsui's seventieth birthday the Prince gave him a generous entertainment; and, although Shu Shunsui wished to leave for Nagasaki, refused to permit him to go away.

Shu Shunsui also made several models of Confucian temples and the schools which are attached to the temples, and of the utensils used in the worship of the Chinese sage and philosopher. These models are well made, accurate, elegant, and truly wonderful, and are still kept in the Shokokwan (Library) in Mito. It is

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said, that His Majesty, the Emperor, during his visit to Mito (October 26 29, 1890), saw these models and expressed great admiration for them.

A few years before Shu Shunsui's death, the Prince persuaded him to make inquiries about his family. When the letter reached them, they thought, on the first reading, that it was nothing but a dream. After several readings, they finally realised, that the person long forgotten and mourned as dead was still on the earth, in the neighboring country. "Rapture moistened with tears was the only consequence." Then, to examine the matter as carefully as possible, they sent to ,Japan a man named Yoko. But, although he came as far as Nagasaki, he was, on his way home captured by an officer of his native country and made to serve as a soldier for several years.

Shu Shunsui's first son, Taisei, had ended his life as a retired teacher; the second son had died without child ; but there remained a son of Taisei. He was named Ikujin, and two years after Yoko had made his vain trip, this grandson came to Nagasaki, but, being prohibited by the law, could not go to Yedo. Shu Shunsui, moreover, was so old, that he could not go to Nagasaki. "What a grievous thing ! The affectionate grandson and the lonely grandfather, though they were in the same land, could not embrace each other! There was no chance of their meeting on this side of the grave ; but it is certain that their dreams every night floated out of their beds and wandered between the western port and the capital. "

Prince Mitsukuni was very much moved by this incomparable misfortune, and tried to have the grandson come to Yedo to live with his grandfather. But Ikujin, on the ground that he ought to return at once and report the facts to his mother, brother, and other relations, declined. Shu Shunsui sent letters to him, and asked many questions about the political changes, and about his old friends. He also advised his grandson to engage in any profession, except that of an officer of the Shing [Ts'ing] dynasty. Ikujin then, with letters from Shu Shunsui and costly presents from the Prince of Mito, sailed for his native country. There a war soon broke out, so that he could not come again, as he wished, to ,Japan.

On Shu Shunsui's eightieth birthday the Prince with his son went to the teacher's house and congratulated him. The learned refugee died in his eighty third year in the fourth month of the second year of Tenwa [1682], and was honored with a burial in Zuiryu, the family cemetery of the Mito princes. He had, a few

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years before, in accordance with the custom of his native land, made his own coffin and shroud. The inscription on the face of his tomb reads as follows: The tomb of Shu, an invited gentleman of the Ming [dynasty]."

Shu Shunsui was "kind and honest; had no mean passions; in his daily conduct he was very regular. His humility is proved by the fact that he never showed to others the letter of invitation



Tombstone of Shu Shunsui

from Prince Roo; it was found, after his death, in a tight box which was kept in the bottom of his trunk. He liked guests, loved his friends, and guided his pupils very kindly. His memory was exceedingly strong; he had a rich imagination, and also a good power of generalisation." His learning was profound and accurate. He was at once mechanic, engineer, statesman, poet, and savant.

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During his service under the Prince of Mito, he was so economical that by the time of his death he had accumulated about 3,000 gold *ryo* (dollars). This money, it is said, he intended for the expense of a new uprising against the invaders of his native land; but he finally left it to the Prince of Mito. After he came to Yedo he several times sent elegant presents to his old student and benefactor Ando to repay the latter for his kindness. But Ando would not accept them, and was content that his old master was receiving an incomparable favor from the wisest prince of the age.

* * *

Another Chinese refugee who found a welcome in the Mito clan must be called, as his true name is unknown, by his priestly name, Shinyetsu., . . In 1677, by the advice of a Japanese merchant in China, he came to Nagasaki The next year, the Prince of Mito sent to him a letter of invitation, which Shinyetsu answered favorablyIn 1683 he entered Mito for the first time and visited the tomb of his countryman, Shu ShunsuiIn the year of Gemoku [1688-1703], Mitsukuni erected in Mito a temple called Gionji, which he purposed to make the head temple of the Soto branch of the Zen sect of BuddhismIn 1694 Shinyetsu showed signs of illness, and the next year passed away at the age of 57. He lies buried within the precincts of the Gion temple, under a plain tomb, bearing the inscription: « The tomb of the great priest Shu [posthumously called] Jusho, opener of the mountain

[temple]."

* * *

It is said that in the Mito clan was yet another Chinese, named [Tanikawa] Kinkei, who is thought to have been only a servant of Shu Shunsui. It is also reported that Mitsukuni invited to the hospitality of his clan still another Chinese scholar, named Cho Hi Bun, and sent a messenger to Nagasaki after him : but he was refused permission by the government on the ground that two Chinese should not be in one clan at the same time.

One other Chinese, named Chin Gen Bin, was not only famous as a scholar, but also very skilful in boxing. He found a refuge in the Owari clan, which, like Mite, although one of the three honorable houses of the Tokuguwa family, was strongly Imperialistic.

Another Buddhist priest named In Gen came over from China and established a sub sect, called Obaku, of the Zen sect, the Japanese Mystics. He went to Kyoto, near which, between Fushimi and Uji, he founded a temple in which the contemplative tenets of the Zen were upheld, with, however, certain differences. It was a

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fine temple and is now in good condition. The priests of this subsect still wear certain Chinese articles of apparel and retain certain Chinese customs.



Tombstone of Shinyetsu

We also heard of another refugee, called Tai Ryu or Tai Man Ko, who was both a priest and a

physician ; and that a stone monument had been erected to his memory, by pupils of his, at Kawagoye, near Tokyo. In January, 1902, after instituting more partic-

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ular inquiries about this matter, and ascertaining that the monument was in the precincts of the temple known as Heirinji, between Tokyo and Kawagoye, we started out in company with a



Monument erected to the memory of Tai Man Ko

Japanese friend to find the place. It turned out to be in Nobitome Village, Niikura County, of the Province of Musashi, and the Saitama Prefecture. The temple is situated on a little knoll called

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Kimpozan about half a mile off the main road to Kawagoye, and about fifteen miles from Tokyo

We found here not only the aforesaid monument, but also many relics of Tai Man Ko. It is true that the monument was first erected at Kawagoye ; but it did not then, and does not now, mark the place of his burial; it is only an honorary monument, a cenotaph, and the place of interment is not definitely known. The monument is of wood, black lacquered and about five feet high and four feet wide; the inscription thereon is to the following purport : [2]

Epitaph on the Monument of the Independent Zen teacher. By Kogentai, disciple.

The teacher was born at Ninwa Koshu China. His father was an official and known as a man of good deeds. His mother was a Ching. Seven children were born to them; and the last was the teacher. His birth took place on the nineteenth day of the second month of the year of Manreki [A. D. 1595 (?)].

The child was bright by nature and had an excellent memory; so that he could repeat whatever he had once glanced at in a book. Though he was sent to school when very young, he had very little inclination to write compositions (a task which constituted the chief pursuit of students in those days).

When he was grown up, he wandered about from one place to another, searching for beautiful mountains and clear streams and other sublime scenery worthy of admiration. When he was thirty years old, he had not yet written a verse. One day a friend of his urged him to compose a poem. Then, to the astonishment and admiration of all present, he spoke out, off hand, a fine rhyme. After this he was always ready to write poetry whenever a subject was suggested to him. His productions came out spontaneously and showed perfect originality.

Previous to this an important political change had taken place in his own country, that is to say, the Ming dynasty had been overthrown by the Shing. He could scarcely bear to enjoy life under the latter government, thinking that it was an awful thing and a disgrace to serve two masters; and this caused him a heartfelt desire to leave that country and come over to our country. As a boat was leaving for Japan, he seized the opportunity and came to Nagasaki. This was on the second day of the third month in the second year of Showo [A. D. 1645].

In this city he met Fusho a Buddhist priest of wide learning, who had been invited from China as a religious teacher. The

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teacher [Tai Man Ko was not a little impressed by the priest and listened with unusual interest to his teaching. At last he was converted from Confucianism to Buddhism.

He was a man of unfettered disposition; he was an extensive reader, especially of religious books, and soon became known to the world. He entered a monastery and was there made a scribe. During the first year of Manji [1658], he came with the priest to the capital. The reputation of his learning and virtue became known among the high officials and noblemen, so that some tried to secure him for a teacher.

During the second year of Manji [1659] he was obliged to return to Nagasaki on account of illness. Having recovered from this sickness, he began a pilgrimage all over the country. Wherever he went, he gave medicine and drove away diseases. The people called him "divine."

He excelled in penmanship. His style of writing exactly corresponded with the ancient standards in penmanship: and his ideographs made a wonderful impression upon those who looked at them. To get a piece of paper containing his writing, or even a single character, was considered the same as to obtain a precious jewel or treasure.

A few years later his teacher Fusho died ; and he came over to the capital again. Soon afterward he was made the priest of Kimpoji which was called Heirin, a Buddhist temple ten *ri* out of the city. This temple had been established by Nobutsuna Minamoto, the Lord of Izu. When he came to this temple, he opened up the country, drew water from the Tama River for the convenience of the people, and added elegant buildings. He went around the neighboring country, teaching the people and comforting them.

He had not forgotten his own country, and would often write out, with indignation, treatises denouncing the great crime of the Shing dynasty, and sympathising with his own people, who were overwhelmed by the terrible calamity which had befallen them. May we not call him one faithful to his own country and a true disciple of Buddha?

He died in the twelfth year of Kwambun [1672] at the age of seventy seven.

The influence exerted by the learned Chinese refugees, especially by Shu Shunsui, was considerable. Besides their direct and indirect literary work, we must not lose sight of the deeper interest which was naturally aroused in the study of Chinese literature and philosophy by their presence. The teachings of Confucianism and

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the personal influence of the men stimulated the feeling of loyalty to Prince and to Emperor. It is, of course, a difficult matter to trace clearly the extent of such influence, but it is generally admitted by those who have studied the matter, that the presence of Chinese *literati* in Japan did give a greater impulse to learning.

* * *

Now, the very fact of the association of Shu Shunsui with Mitsukuni, Prince of Mito,[\[3\]](#) illustrates the two or three lines along which the Japanese were gradually led to renewed political or administrative unity, that is, to Imperialism. One line was Confucianism, which taught loyalty; another line was historical research, which exhibited the Shogun as a usurper; and a third was the revival of Pure Shinto, which necessarily and spontaneously accompanied or followed the second.

[At this point, in corroboration of that thought, quotations can be made from the writings of Prof. B. H. Chamberlain, Rev. Dr.

W. E. Griffis, Mr. Haga, and Nariaki (Rekko), Prince of Mito. Of these, Professor Chamberlain emphasises the influence of historical research; while the others direct attention to the union of Chinese philosophy with Shinto teaching and historical study in producing anew state of affairs. Mr. Haga says : "For some time before the restoration these [Mito] scholars exercised great influence on the minds of the *Samurai*, and indirectly did much to bring about the revolution.."]

It would seem, therefore, as if Shinto and Confucianism, although in many respects antagonistic (simply from the fact that one was Japanese while the other was Chinese), were made, like Herod and Pilate on one occasion, friends in a common cause. The Japanese during the Tokugawa seem



MITSUKUNI, PRINCE OF MITO.

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to have been led along three roads to Imperialism. There was the straight highway of historical research; on the right side, generally parallel with the main road, and often running into it, was the path of Shinto; on the opposite side, making frequently a wide detour to the left, was the road to Confucianism : but all these roads led to Kyoto.

In corroboration of this view, Mr. Nitobe says : " The revival of Chinese classics, consequent upon the migration of the Chinese savants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reminded that they owed allegiance solely and singly to the Tenno (Emperor). The simultaneous revival of Pure Shintoism, which inculcated the divine right and descent of the Emperor, also conveyed *the same political evangel*." It seems, therefore, as if, with the aid of Chinese savants, Mitsukuni, " the Japanese Maecenas," a scholar himself and the patron of scholars, set on foot a renaissance in literature, learning, and politics, and has most appropriately been styled by Sir Ernest M. Satow "the real author of the movement which culminated in the Revolution of 1868.

NOTES

1 See Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan Vols. XXI V. and XXX.

1 Translated by Prof. Y. Chiba, of Duncan [Baptist] Academy, Tokyo.

3 I have been so fortunate as to run across a small photograph of Mitsukuni (Giko) the third Tokugawa Prince of Mito, who was the patron of learning and gave several Chinese refugees a shelter in his clan. For information concerning this Japanese Mæcenas, see papers in the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan on "The Tokugawa Princes of Mito" (Vol. XVIII., Part r), "The Mito Civil War" (Vol. XIX., Part z), "Chinese Refugees of the Seventeenth Century in Mito" (Vol. XXIV.) and "Instructions of a Mito Prince to His Retainers" (Vol. XXVII.). The above mentioned photograph is here reproduced.