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Abstract: This is a pioneering study of the historical reception of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes) in the Ryukyu Kingdom in the early modern period. The *Yijing* was not a very popular text among Ryukyuan scholars who neither reprinted Chinese commentaries nor wrote their own commentaries on the text. They studied the *Yijing* mainly through the interpretations of Zhu Xi, and no one specialized in it. However, the *yinyang wuxing* theory and divination associated with the *Yijing* were incorporated into Ryukyuan traditions, applied to all walks of life, including geomancy, folk religion, medicine, and architecture.

The Historical Reception of *Yijing* in Early Modern Ryukyu

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Introduction

The Ryukyu Kingdom was an important member in the Chinese maritime trade network, but was only peripheral in the Confucian cultural sphere. Ryukyuan scholars studied Chinese language and culture to facilitate trading and governance rather than to pursue excellence in Confucian scholarship. They sometime cited Confucian classics in their writings, but did not write their own commentaries. It is very difficult to study the history of Confucianism in the Ryukyu Kingdom, not to mention a particular text.¹

The *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of Changes), one of the most influential Confucian classics in the Sinosphere, has been ardently studied in Japan, Korea, and Viet Nam.² A large number of commentaries on its text, images, and divination were written in literary Sinitic by Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese scholars. How the *Yijing* was studied and used by the Ryukyuan scholars remains unknown. This is a pioneering study of the historical reception of the *Yijing* in the Ryukyu Kingdom in the early modern period. The *Yijing* was not a very popular text among Ryukyuan scholars who neither reprinted Chinese commentaries nor wrote their own commentaries on the text. Although Ryukyuan scholars made little contribution to *Yijing* studies, the *Yijing* remained influential in Ryukyuan society and culture. In particular, the *yinyang wuxing* 陰陽五行 (two primal forces and five phases) theory and divination associated with the *Yijing* were incorporated into Ryukyuan traditions, applied to all walks of life, including geomancy, folk religion, medicine, and architecture. Based on primary Ryukyuan, Chinese, and Japanese sources, this study aims to outline the history of the *Yijing* in the Ryukyu Kingdom in the early modern period, focusing on

¹ For a historical overview of Confucianism in the Ryukyu Kingdom, see Uezato Kenichi 上里賢一, “Liuqiu dui Ruxue de shourong,” 琉球對儒學的受容 (Reception of Confucianism in Ryukyu), *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies* 3.1 (2006): 3-25. See also Barry Steben, “The Transmission of Neo-Confucianism to the Ryukyu (Liuqiu) Islands and Its Historical Significance,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 11.1 (1998): 39-60. Sai On 蔡温 (1682–1761), a Confucian scholar and statesman in Ryukyu, has drawn academic attention. See: Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999); and Sakuma Tadashi 佐久間正, “Sai On no shisō: Ryūkyū ōkoku ni okeru Jukyō to fūsui,” 蔡温の思想：琉球王国における儒教と風水 (The thought of Sai On: Confucianism and *fengshui* in the Ryukyu Kingdom), *Nihon shisō shigaku* 日本思想史学 43 (2011): 111-27.

² See Wai-ming Ng, *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000); Ng, “The *I Ching* in Late Chosŏn Thought,” *Korean Studies* 24 (2000): 53-68; Ng, “*Yijing* Scholarship in Late-Nguyen Vietnam: A Study of Le Van Ngu’s *Chu Dich Cuu Nguyen* (An Investigation of the Origins of the *Yijing*, 1916),” *Review in Vietnamese Studies* 3:1 (December 2003): 1-14.

its popularization and impact. It has implications for understanding the role of the *Yijing* in the making of Ryukyuan culture and the characteristics of Confucianism in the Ryukyu Kingdom.

The Transmission of the *Yijing* to Ryukyu

Unlike Korea, Japan or Vietnam, the Ryukyu Kingdom did not have a long history of Confucian education. Its transmission of Confucianism can only be traced to the fourteenth century when the Ryukyuan prince and his ministers went to Ming China to study Confucian classics at the Imperial Academy in 1392. In the Ming and Qing periods, Chinese books were imported to Ryukyu, but most Ryukyuan only read introductory texts and morality books. Ryukyuan scholars had a preference for the political and social morality in the Four Books over the abstract thinking of the Five Classics. The *Yijing*, considered the most difficult text in the Five Classics, was never well received and its transmission to the Ryukyu Kingdom remains obscure.

The time of the first introduction of the *Yijing* to the Ryukyu Kingdom is uncertain. Although it may have been introduced prior to the Ming period through Chinese merchants or Japanese monks, it is safe to state that it arrived no later than the fourteenth century when Ryukyu started paying tribute to the Ming court. There were three different ways of transmission as follows:

First, importation from China. During the Ming and Qing periods, the Ryukyu court send its ministers and scholars to study Confucian classics at the Imperial Academy in Nanjing and Beijing. Following the Chinese practice, students from Ryukyu first studied the Four Books and then the Five Classics. The *Yijing* was the last text to study in their three-year curriculum.³

Ryukyuan delegates, merchants, students, and migrants brought a small number of Chinese books to Ryukyu. Li Dingyuan 李鼎元 (1750-1805), the vice-envoy on a Chinese investiture mission to Ryukyu, made this observation in Naha: “This nation has published few books and has not purchased many books from China. No wonder, its civilization is not as flourishing as Korea.”⁴ There are only two Chinese commentaries on the *Yijing* found in the book collection of the Sonan Family 楚南家 of Kumemura 久米村, namely *Yijing daquan huijie* 易經大全會解 (An explanation of the *Yijing Daquan*, 1681), by Lai Ersheng 來爾繩 of the Qing and *Yijing jinghua* 易經精華 (Essence of the *Yijing*, 1851), by Xue Jiaying 薛嘉穎, also of the Qing. Both were imported from Qing China and read by the official Chinese interpreter, Gi Shōsei 魏掌政 (b. 1826) who was a prominent figure in Kumemura.⁵ He studied the *Yijing daquan huijie*, a collection of commentaries based on the interpretations of Zhu Xi, seriously, because it was chosen as the textbook by the Meirindō 明倫堂, the Confucian academy in Kumemura. He jotted down his thoughts on the book page by page and cited many Chinese commentaries to elaborate the

³ Pang Xiang 潘相, ed., *Liuqiu Ruxue jianwenlu* 琉球入學見聞錄 (Records of the Ryukyuan students studying at the Imperial Academy, 1768) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1973), p. 346.

⁴ Li Dingyuan, *Shi Liuqiu ji* 使琉球記 (Records of my mission to Ryukyu), in National Diet Library of Japan (call number 7-597), vol. 5, p. 8.

⁵ There were a very small number of Confucian texts (such as Zhu Xi's *Sishu jizhu* 四書集註) reprinted in Ryukyu, but all *Yijing* commentaries found in Ryukyu were imported either from China or Japan.

meanings of the *Yijing*. These texts include: *Yichuan* 易傳 (by Yang Chengzhai 楊誠齋, 1127-1206, of the Song); *Zhouyi huitong* 周易會通 (by Dong Zhiqing 董直卿 of the Yuan); *Zhouyi mengyin* 周易蒙引 (by Cai Qing 蔡清, 1453-1508, of the Ming); *Yijing zhijie* 易經直解 (by Zhang Juzheng 張居正, 1525-1582, of the Ming); *Zhouyi zhengjie* 周易正解 (by Hao Jing 郝敬, 1558-1639, of the Ming); and *Zhouyi guangyi* 周易廣義 (by Pan Yuanmao 潘元懋, of the Qing). It indicates that not a few Chinese commentaries on the *Yijing* were imported to Ryukyu and some Ryukyuan scholars studied them seriously. Many of these Chinese texts were reprinted in Fujian Province.⁶ In contrast, Shōsei left few notes on the *Yijing jinghua* which was not a textbook for the Meirindō.

Second, importation from Japan. In the medieval period, Japanese Zen Buddhist monks visited the Ryukyu Kingdom. They were also familiar with Chinese learning and carried Chinese books to Buddhist temples in Naha. In the early seventeenth century, Satsuma domain invaded Ryukyu and forced the Ryukyu court to pay tribute. With the opening of exchanges between Ryukyu and Satsuma, Japanese Confucianism was introduced to Ryukyu. In 1632, Tomari Jochiku 泊如竹 (1570-1655), a Buddhist monk and Confucian scholar from Satsuma, came to teach the Ryukyu imperial family the Confucian Classics and was warmly received by the Ryukyu king Shō Hō 尚豐 (1590-1640). Jochiku was a disciple of Bunshi Genshō 文之玄昌 (1555-1620), a representative scholar of the Satsunan 薩南 school of Confucianism in Satsuma. During his three-year sojourn in Ryukyu, Jochiku lectured for the Ryukyu king and princes on the Four Books using Bunshi's punctuation method.⁷ It is not certain whether he brought Bunshi's punctuated *Zhouyi chuanyi* 周易傳義 (by Dong Kai 董楷, b. 1226, of the Song) or *Zhouyi chuanyi Daquan* 周易傳義大全 (by Hu Guang 胡廣, 1369-1418, of the Ming); both were combination of Cheng Yi's 程頤 (1033-1107) and Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) commentaries.⁸

A small number of *Yijing* commentaries written by Tokugawa scholars were brought to Ryukyu via Kyushu. For example, the Miyara family 宮良家 in Ishigakijima kept a copy of Arai Hakuga's 新井白蛾 (1715-1792) *Ekigaku shōsen* 易學小荃 (A Simple Interpretation of the *Yijing*, 1754).

Third, locally printed or copied in Ryukyu. In 1505, the Ryukyu king Shō Shin 尚真 (1465-1527) ordered the production of an official edition of the Four Books and the Five Classics. Pang Xiang 潘相 (1713-1790), a teacher for Ryukyu students in the Imperial Academy in Beijing,

6 Most of these Fujian reprints belonged to the works of the Zhu Xi school or introductory books for children's enlightenment. There was no reprint of *Yijing* commentaries. See Takatsu Takashi, "Ming Jianyang Prints and the Spread of the Teachings of Zhu Xi to Japan and the Ryukyu Kingdom in the Seventeenth Century," in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *The East Asian Mediterranean Maritime: Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), pp. 253-67.

⁷ See Takatsu Takashi 高津孝, "Kinsei Ryūkyū ni okeru Kanseki juyō," 近世琉球における漢籍受容 (The transmission of Chinese books in early modern Ryukyu), *Amami nyūzuretā* 5 (April 2004): 10.

⁸ See my *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*, pp. 32-33.

listed some Chinese books reprinted under the order of the Ryukyu king as follows: “At the request of the [Ryukyu] king, books were reprinted in this order: The Four Books, Five Classics, *Xiao xue* 小學, *Jinsilu jijie bianmeng xiangshuo* 近思錄集解便蒙詳說, *Giwen zhenbao* 古文真寶, and *Qianjia shi* 千家詩. They are official editions kept in the imperial court and are granted upon request.”⁹ Whether commentaries on the Five Classics were reprinted in Ryukyu is highly questionable, as no one has ever seen a single title.¹⁰

Ryukyu scholars also hand-copied Chinese books, and the number of hand-copied Chinese books can match those of the published books.¹¹ Although we cannot find any hand-copied *Yijing* commentaries in Ryukyu, some hand-copied Chinese books containing *Yijing*-related content have survived into modern times. For example, the Mōuji 毛氏 family in Shuri had a Japanese reprint of the *Kongsheng quanshu* 孔聖全書 (Complete writings of Confucius) (originally published in China in 1598, reprinted in Japan in 1668). Matsumoto Tōsō 松茂當宗 hand-copied it in 1884. The text contains many *Yijing*-related writings.

The Spread of the *Yijing* in the Ryukyu Kingdom

In Shuri, the capital of Ryukyu, the Fujianese immigrant community in Kumemura, rather than the imperial court, was the center of Confucian education.

Ryukyu princes studied Confucian classics in their childhood. For example, Tei Junsoku 程順則 (1663-1734), a prominent Confucian scholar, was invited to lecture on the Four Books for

⁹ Pang Xiang, ed., *Liuqiu ruxue jianwenlu*, p. 183. Takatsu Takashi does not believe that all books listed in the *Liuqiu ruxue jianwenlu* were official editions. See Takatsu Takashi, *Hakubutsugaku to shomotsu no Higashi Ajia: Satsuma Ryūkyū to kaiiki kōryū* 博物学と書物の東アジア—薩摩・琉球と海域交流— (Natural history and books in East Asia: Satsuma-Ryukyu Exchanges) (Ginowan: Yōju shorin, 2010), pp. 142-43. Takatsu seems to be right in this regard. For example, it is unlikely that the Ryukyu government reprinted the *Jinsilu jijie bianmeng xiangshuo* (*Kinshiroku shūge benmō shōsetsu*, 1695), a commentary on Zhu Xi’s *Jinsilu* 近思錄 (Reflections on things at hand) written by the early Tokugawa Confucian Tsukita Katsunobu 筑田勝信.

¹⁰ When Mutō Chōhei 武藤長平 (1879-1938) went to Okinawa to investigate ancient books during the Taishō period (1912-1925), he found a number of Ryukyuan reprints of commentaries on the Four Books, including *Sishū jizhu* 四書集註 (reprinted in 1850), *Sishū liyancho* 四書俚諺鈔 (reprinted in 1850), *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註 and *Daxue zhangju* 大學章句, but could not find a single commentary on the Five Classics. See Mutō Chōhei, *Seinan bun’un shiron* 西南文運史論 (Essays on the cultural history of the southwestern provinces [of Japan]) (Tokyo: Oka shoin, 1926), pp. 185-203. Uezato Kin’ichi 上里賢一 argues that these texts may not be the Ryukyuan reprints. See Uezato Kin’ichi, *Higashi Ajia Kanji bunkaken no naka ni okeru Ryūkyū Kanshibun no ichi* 東アジア漢字文化圏の中における琉球漢詩文の位置 (Locating Ryukyuan Chinese-style poetry in the East Asian cultural sphere of Chinese characters) (Report of Research Project # 16520214 [2017]), pp. 8-9.

¹¹ Tsuzuki Akiko 都築晶子 maintains that hand-copied Chinese books had a wider circulation than published Chinese books in the Ryukyu Kingdom. See Tsuzuki Akiko, “Hajime ni” はじめに (Preface), in Chatanchō kyōiku iinkai 北谷町教育委員会, ed., *Kinra Sōhō monjo: Eki takujitsu fūsui* 金良宗邦文書：易・擇日・風水 (The Kinra Sōhō Document: *Yijing* oracles, auspicious date selection, and *fengshui*) (Chatanchō: Hatanchō kyōiku iinkai, 1993), p. 3.

the princes. There are no records of lectures on the *Yijing* in the imperial court, but members of the imperial family seemed to have acquired some knowledge of it. The fifteenth king of the second Shō Dynasty, Shō On 尚温 (1784-1802) borrowed the term, “yude” 育德 (lit., cultivating morality) from the *Yijing* to name a spring. Li Dingyuan praised the Ryukyu king as follows:

[In the image of Meng, the fourth hexagram, of] the *Yijing* reads: “Under a mountain emerges a spring, not knowing its path. Leaders use effective action to nurture inner virtues.” The king of Chūzan (Ryukyu) found a spring in the southern garden he newly built and named it *yude*. The moral cultivation of the king is like the spring.¹²

Compared to the imperial court, Kumemura was more important in Confucian education. Kumemura people received Confucian education systematically in their hometowns and then served the Ryukyu government as officials, diplomats, interpreters, and secretaries. The Confucian Temple and the Confucian Academy Meirindō were founded in 1674 and 1718, respectively. Wang Ji 汪楫 (1626-1689), the Qing envoy to Ryukyu in 1683, made this observation after a visit to the Confucian Temple in Kumemura:

There are the portraits of four people [Yan Hui, Zeng Shen, Zi Si and Mencius] standing on the sides of the spirit tablet of the holiest teacher Confucius, holding the *Classic of Poetry*, *Classic of Documents*, *Classic of Changes* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, respectively. From the *Classic of Poetry*, *Classic of Documents*, *Classic of Changes* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, we know they really respect our Confucius.¹³

Meirindō provided Confucian education and Chinese training for Kumemura young men. It had a library of Chinese books. The Qing vice-envoy to Ryukyu, Xu Baoguang 徐葆光 (1671-1723) was impressed by its collection. He wrote: “The two sides of the Meirindō have a relatively comprehensive collection of Confucian Classics and Chinese literature.”¹⁴

Besides the Meirindō, there were other schools in Shuri to teach the Confucian Classics and the Chinese language. A national academy, entitled Kokugaku 国学 was established in 1798. It provided education for members of the imperial family, noblemen, and ministers. Its curriculum

¹² In *Ryūkyū kokuchū himonki* 琉球國中碑文記 (Inscriptions in the Ryukyu Kingdom), p. 47. Downloaded from the Iba Fuyū Collection 伊波普猷文庫, University of the Ryukyus Library. (<http://manwe.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/cgi-bin/disp-img.cgi?file=iha0080>)

¹³ Wang Ji, “Liuqiuguo xinjian zhishengmiao ji,” 琉球國新建至聖廟記 (A record of my visit to the newly built Confucian Temple in Ryukyu), in Zhou Huang 周煌, ed., *Liuqiuguo zhilue* 琉球國志略 (A brief history of Ryukyu) (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), vol. 15, p. 181.

¹⁴ Xu Baoguang, *Zhongshan chuanxinlu* 中山傳信錄 (Account of my mission to Zhongshan), vol. 4, p. 45. Downloaded from the Iba Fuyū Collection, University of the Ryukyus Library. (<http://manwe.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/cgi-bin/disp-img.cgi?file=iha0185>)

was divided into two streams: Confucian Classics and Chinese literature.

The Meirindō and Kokugaku shared some common features in Confucian education. They adopted the Four Books and the Five Classics as required textbooks and put more emphasis on the Four Books.¹⁵ They both used Zhu Xi's commentaries to teach the Yijing. According to the Tosa Confucian Tobe Yoshihiro 戸部良熙, in the teaching of the Yijing, the Meirindō used the *Wujing jichuan* 五經集傳 (Collected commentaries on the Five Classics), whereas Kokugaku adopted the *Yijing daquan huijie*.¹⁶ In terms of teaching and learning, the former used both "direct reading" (chokudoku 直讀) and "reading the Chinese text in Japanese" (*kundoku* 訓讀), whereas the latter used *kundoku* only.¹⁷

At the elementary level, the village schools in the Shuri and its surrounding regions offered children with basic Chinese and Japanese education.¹⁸ Graduates of the village schools could move on to one of the three Mihira School 三平等学校 in Shuri to receive intermediate-level education. Some Buddhist temples in Shuri also had Chinese books and provided elementary education in their private academies. Xia Ziyang 夏子陽 (1552-1610), a Ming envoy to Ryukyu, made this report:

I have heard that there is a big Buddhist temple called Engakuji 圓覺寺 located on the right side of the Imperial Palace in the Ryukyu Kingdom. In its library, there are the Four Books and Five Classics granted by the king. It also has many other books such as [*Peiwen*] *yunfu* 韻府, [*Zizhi*] *tongjian* 通鑑, and *Tangxian santishi* 唐賢三體詩. It also has Buddhist sutras such as *Huayan* 華嚴, *Fahua* 法華 and *Lengyan* 楞嚴. Its monks chant the *Xinjing* 心經 (Heart Sutra) and teach the sons of ministers the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects of Confucius).¹⁹

¹⁵ See Uezato Kenichi, "Liuqiu dui Ruxue de shourong," pp. 3-25.

¹⁶ See Tobe Yoshihiro, *Ōshima hikki* 大島筆記 (Notes of Ōshima, 1726), in Shinmura Izuru 新村出, ed., *Kaihyō sōsho* 3 海表叢書 3 (Kyoto: Kōseikaku shoten, 1928). Modern scholars such as Majikina Ankō 真境名安興 (1875-1933) and Takatsu Takashi (b. 1958) have cited this piece of information from the *Ōshima hikki*. See Majikina Ankō, "Okinawa ni okeru Kōshikyō no enkaku," 沖繩に於ける孔子教の沿革 (The history of the religion of Confucius in Okinawa), *Ryūkyū shinpō* 琉球新報 (June 13, 1917), p. 19; Takatsu Takashi, "Kinsei Ryūkyū ni okeru Kanseki juyō," p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ōshima hikki*, vol. 3, pp. 36-37. *Kundoku* was a unique way of reading literary Chinese (*Kanbun* 漢文) developed by the Japanese. Chinese texts were punctuated, analyzed, and translated into classical Japanese. See Rebekah Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 94-140.

¹⁸ See Takahashi Toshizō 高橋俊三, *Ryūkyū ōkoku jidai no shotō kyōiku: Yaeyama ni okeru Kanseki no ryūkyūgo shiryō* 琉球王国時代の初等教育：八重山における漢籍の琉球語資料 (Elementary education in the Ryukyu Kingdom: Data about the Ryukyuan language in Chinese books in Yaeyama) (Ginowan: Yōjushorin, 2011).

¹⁹ Xia Ziyang, *Xingcha shenglan* 星槎勝覽 (Records of my voyages), cited in Zhao Yongfu 趙永復 and Fu Linxiang 傅林祥, eds., *Zhonghua dadian* 中華大典 (Great dictionary of China) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2004), p. 43.

Many Chinese books in Engakuji were brought to Ryukyu from Kyoto by the Japanese Zen monk Kaiin Shōko 芥隱承琥 (d. 1495) when he founded the temple in Shuri in 1492.²⁰

Outside Shuri, Chinese books scattered in different parts of the main island of the Ryukyu Kingdom. In terms of *Yijing*-related books, the best collection can be found in the Kinra family 金良家 in the Chatanichō 北谷町 in the middle part of the main island. According to the *Kinra Sōhō monjo*, the family documents compiled by Kinra Sōhō 金良宗邦 (1898-1987), his family library has the following *Yijing*-related Chinese and Japanese books: *Zhou Huikui jiaozheng Yijing daquan* 周會魁校正易經大全 (The *Yijing daquan* proofread by Zhou Huikui) by Hu Guang 胡廣 of the Ming, proofread by Zhou Shixian 周士顯 of the Ming; *Yuzuan Zhouyi zhezhong* 御纂周易折中 (Balanced annotations of the *Zhouyi* compiled upon imperial order) by Li Quandi 李光地 of the Qing; *Zengshan boyi* 增刪卜易 (Revised *Yijing* divination) by Yehe Laoren 野鶴老人 of the Qing; *Gogyōeki shinan* 五行易指南 (A guide to the *Wuhang-Yi[jing]*) by Sakurada Komon 桜田虎門 of the Tokugawa; and *Ekigaku dokushū ōzassho* 易学獨習大雜書 (Collection of notes on the *Yijing* in my self-study), compiled by Kinra Sōhō. It also lists a number of books on *fengshui*, fortune-telling and numerology that borrow ideas and terms from the *Yijing*.²¹ For example, Kinra Sōhō, in his commentary on the *Guanyin lingqian* 觀音靈籤 (Efficacious oracle of Guanyin), associates one hundred predictive poems with different hexagrams of the *Yijing*. Using the first poem as an example, it reads: “Good omen. Zodiac sign of Zi. The Poem: Good relationships were preordained at the time of creation. Everything is fine on a fortunate day. It is uncommon to get such lot. If you behave properly, you will be endorsed by the king.” Sōhō associated this poem with the hexagram *kan* 坎, and he explained it briefly in Chinese and in more detail in Japanese. He remarked in Chinese on this poem: “This hexagram is a symbol of the creation of heaven and earth. A sign of everything going smoothly.”²² The Kinra family had had a keen interest in *Yijing* divination and Sōhō himself was an *ekisha* 易者 (*Yijing* diviner).²³ He used both yarrow stalks and bronze coins (Kanei tsūhō 寛永通宝, Japanese coin minted during the Kanei era, 1624-1644) to divine.

Some larger outlying islands in the Ryukyu Kingdom also had Chinese books.²⁴ Xu Baoguang wrote: “Different islands have also been communicating with China, purchasing and

²⁰ Higashi Ajia Kanji bunkaken no naka ni okeru Ryūkyū Kanshibun no ichi, p. 1.

²¹ See the table of contents in *Kinra Sōhō monjo: Eki takujitsu fūsu*.

²² Yamazato Junichi 山里純一, “Kinra Sōhō monjo Kannon reisen” 金良宗邦文書《觀音靈籤》 (The *Kannon reisen*, a document held by Kinra Sōhō), in *Nihon Tōyō bunka ronshū* 日本東洋文化論集 (Collection of articles on Japan-East Asian culture) 15 (March 2009): 141-42.

²³ *Ekisha* refers to professional *Yijing* diviners. For the activities of *ekisha* in Tokugawa Japan, see my *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*, pp. 45-47.

²⁴ See Takatsu Takashi and Einogawa Atsushi 榮野川敦, eds., *Zōho Ryūkyū kankei Kanseki mokuroku* 増補琉球關係漢籍目錄 (Supplementary index to the Chinese books about Ryukyu), report for the project, entitled, *Higashi Ajia shuppan bunka no kenkyū* 東アジア出版文化の研究 (A study of publication culture in East Asia) (March 2005).

collecting Chinese books.”²⁵ For instance, Amami Ōshima, an island located between Kyushu and Ryukyu, had a good collection of Chinese books. He noted: “This island has no Confucian Temple, but it has the Four Books, the Five Classics, and the [*Quan*] *Tangshi* [全]唐詩 (Complete Tang poems). Its people call this island ‘small Ryukyu.’”²⁶ Most of these Chinese books came from Japan in the late medieval and early modern periods. The *Sishu jizhu* 四書集註 (Collected commentaries on the Four Books) by Zhu Xi, held in the Moriyama family 盛山家, was a Japanese edition reprinted in Edo.²⁷

Miyakojima established a public school called Nanboku gakkō 南北學校 (South-North School) to provide basic Chinese education, such as the reading of the *Sanzijing* 三字經 (Three-Character Classic) and the use of the abacus. The Motomura family 本村家 of this island had a collection of Chinese books. Ishigakijima had teachers to teach basic Chinese education. The Toyokawa family 豊川家 and the Takehara family 竹原家 had collections of Chinese books and Japanese commentaries on Chinese books. Their collections contain twenty-six commentaries on Confucian Classics, including the *Sishu tizhu* 四書體註 (Annotated edition of the Four Books), compiled by Fan Xiang 范翔 of the Qing, one of the most popular Confucian texts in Ryukyu after the eighteenth century.²⁸ However, no *Yijing* commentaries have been found in Miyakojima and Ishigakijima.

Ryukyu Confucians and the *Yijing*

Tei Junsoku and Sai On 蔡溫 (1682-1761) were the representative Confucian scholars of Ryukyu. Both were scholar-bureaucrats born and raised in Kumemura. Although they did not write any commentaries on the *Yijing*, their writings contain many *Yijing*-related ideas.

Junsoku, after his visit to the Confucian Temple, praised Confucius for perfecting morality. He remarked:

My Confucius has achieved success by putting things together. He edited ancient poems and documents, compiled rituals and music, explained the *Zhouyi* and wrote the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (The Spring and Autumn Annals). Emperor and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, friend and friend are all happy with their roles. Riots are few.²⁹

²⁵ *Zhongshan chuanxinlu*, vol. 4, pp. 4-5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁷ “Kinsei Ryūkyū ni okeru Kanseki juyō,” pp. 7-9

²⁸ Mizukami Masaharu 水上雅晴, “Ryūkyū chihō shijin Kanseki gakushū no jittai” 琉球地方士人漢籍學習の実態 (Study of Chinese books among intellectuals in different regions of Ryukyu), in *Ryūkyū daigaku kyōikugakubu kiyō* 琉球大学教育学部紀要 84 (February 2014): 4.

²⁹ “Liuqiuguo xinjian zhishengmiao ji,” in *Liuqiuguo zhilue*, vol. 15, p. 185.

It is interesting to note that he used “my” to refer to Confucius, showing that he was proud of his Chinese origin. He praised Confucius for canonizing the Six Classics. Junsoku studied the *Yijing* under the Ryukyu Confucian Tei Kōryō 鄭弘良 who taught Shō Jun 尚純 (1660-1707), crown prince of the king Shō Tei 尚貞 (1645-1709), the *Yijing*, *Shujing* 書經 (Classic of Documents) and *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites) in 1701.³⁰ He said: “In early summer I went to the visit Tei Kōryō in his house to express my gratitude to him for lecturing the *Yijing* for me.”³¹ He presented a pentasyllabic poetry to his teacher:

The *Zhouyi* contains eternal truth. 一部義周書，渾然萬理存。
 Only you can understand its mystery. 誰能窺奧義，汝獨契微言。
 Your teaching methods have enlightened this foolish student. 面命盡師法，耳提
 啟我昏。
 I express my gratitude to you for coming to teach me from afar on this rainy
 morning day.³² 今朝梅雨霽，謝勞遠臨門。

Junsoku also studied the Confucian Classic, including the *Yijing*, under the Chinese scholar Chen Yuanfu 陳元輔 in Fuzhou for four years. As Chen recalled:

Mr. Tei Chōbun 程子寵文 [another name for Junsoku] was sent to Fuzhou on an official mission. He sought my advice on learning all day long. I taught him the *Yijing* and *Quan Tangshi*. Mr. Tei was exceptionally brilliant and thoughtful. He fully understood what I said.³³

Hence, Junsoku studied the *Yijing* seriously under two Confucian scholars who were faithful to Zhu Xi. He himself did not leave any writings on it.

Unlike Tei Junsoku, Sai On had no record of studying the *Yijing*. However, his thoughts concerning politics, cosmology, and geomancy were imbued with such *Yijing*-related concepts as *yinyang* 陰陽 (two primal forces), *wuxing* 五行 (five phases) and *taiji* 太極 (supreme ultimate). In the *Saō hengen* 簑翁片言 (Brief remarks of an old man wearing a straw raincape, 1746), he applied *yinyang* to morality and politics:

Things (*shi* 事) refer to ourselves, family, and nation. Things to accomplish (*yi* 義) refer to self-cultivation, family management, nation governance, and the

³⁰ Ōshiro Tatsuhiro 大城立裕, *Ryūkyū no eiketsu tachi* 琉球の英傑たち (Great characters in Ryukyu) (Tokyo: Purejidentosha, 1992), p. 235.

³¹ Quoted in Iha Fuyū 伊波普猷 and Majikina Ankō, *Ryūkyū no go ijūjin* 琉球之五偉人 (Five great men in Ryukyu) (Naha: Ozawa shoten, 1916), p. 216.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p. 217.

pacification of the world. I believe *shi* and *yi* to men is like *yin* and *yang* to heaven or *qi* (vital energy) and blood to human beings. The circulation of *yin* and *yang* creates everything in the world. Regulating *qi* (vital energy) and blood can maintain life. *Shi* and *yi* are crucial to self-cultivation and the governance of the nation. *Qi* and *yi* are *yang*, blood and *shi* are *yin*. This shows that the same principle is applicable to both heaven and human beings.³⁴

He was more explicit in the *Hitori monogatari* 独物語 (Soliloquy, 1750):

The ways of the five professions (*wuhang* 五行 [namely: scholars, peasants, artisans, merchants and officials]) and the four classes (*simin* 四民 [namely: scholars, peasants, artisans, and merchants]) are created by human beings based on the natural principle of *yinyang wuxing*. Hence, politics should be implemented using *yinyang wuxing* as the underlying principle.³⁵

Likewise, he used *yin-yang* to explain the formation of the universe in the opening paragraph of the *Seimu yōron* 夢醒要論 (Important views after waking up, 1754):

It was in primordial chaos before the creation of *qi*. It is impossible to describe it and we now call it *taiji*. *Taiji* refers to the state of emptiness. In the beginning of creation, *qi* came out from nothing. After the appearance of *qi*, *yin* and *yang* were divided, heaven and earth were separated, and human beings and living things were born. These were all the wonderful applications of *qi*. *Qi* is the creator.³⁶

Sai On was also a master of *fengshui*, Chinese geomancy that contains many *Yijing*-related concepts. He studied it under Liu Riji 劉日霽 in Fuzhou and brought back relevant books and compasses to Ryukyu. He was asked to advise on the *fengshui* of the Shuri Castle, National Temple (Sūgijji 崇元寺), and Royal Mausoleum (Tamaudun 玉陵). In the *Sanpu ryūmyaku hi* 三府龍脈碑 (Monument of the dragon vein in the three provinces, 1750), he argued that the three provinces of the Ryukyu Kingdom were located in the dragon vein. and thus he did not support moving the capital from Shuri to Nago and building canals.³⁷ He was also familiar with *Yijing* divination and wrote the *Taidaneki chūshaku* 体断易注釈 (Commentary on *Yijing* oracles).³⁸

³⁴ Sai On, *Zuchi yōden, Saō hengen* 圖治要傳· 簞翁片言 (Essentials of governance; Brief remarks of an old man wearing a straw raincape) (Naha: Okinawa kyōdo kyōkai, 1935), p. 46.

³⁵ Sai On, *Hitori monogatari* (Naha: Okinawa kyōdo kyōkai, 1934), pp. 13-14.

³⁶ In Okinawa rekishi kenkyūkai 沖縄歴史研究会, ed., *Sai On senshū* 蔡温選集 (Selected Works of Sai On) (Naha: Hoshi insatsu shuppanbu, 1967), p. 85.

³⁷ Sakuma Tadashi, “Sai On no shisō: Ryūkyū ōkoku ni okeru Jukyō to fūsui,” *Nihon shisō shigaku* 43 (September 2011): 111-27.

³⁸ This may be the only commentary written by a Ryukyuan scholar. It is more about divination than the

Ryukyuan Folklore and the *Yijing*

The *Yijing* was not a very popular Confucian classic in Ryukyu, but its related ideas were incorporated into Ryukyuan folklore. The creation myth of Ryukyu contains elements of *taiji* and *yinyang*. The *Chūzan seikan* 中山世鑑 (Mirror of Chūzan, 1650), the first official history of Ryukyu, uses the term, “*yinyang hehe*” 陰陽和合 to refer to sexual intercourse between the two founding gods: the goddess Amamikyō (阿摩美久) and her brother Shinerikyō (志仁禮久). Regarding the beginning of the Ryukyu imperial family, it reads:

Although they did not harmonize *yin* and *yang*, the wind blew and the goddess [Amamikyō] became pregnant. She gave birth to three sons and two daughters. The first son was the first king of this nation. His name was Tenson-shi 天孫氏 [lit. heavenly descendant].³⁹

The ethnologist Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887-1953) called the two founding gods “gods of *yin* and *yang*” (*inyōshin* 陰陽神).⁴⁰

The *Chūzan seifu* 中山世譜 (Genealogy of Chūzan, 1701), another official history of Ryukyu, begins with these sentences:

Before the separation of heaven and earth, there was a state of primordial chaos. There was no distinction between *yin* and *yang*, the clear and the muddy. When *taiji* appeared, it generated the two complementary forces. The two complementary forces generated the four aggregates. The changes of the four aggregates gave birth to everything. Hence, heaven and earth have become heaven and earth; human beings and things have become human beings and things.⁴¹

In addition, it contains a record that a local leader used the *Yijing* for an oracle in the fourteenth century. Before Satto 察度 (1321-1395) became the king, he made a request to marry the daughter of Katsuren Aji 勝連按司 (d. 1458), the lord of the Katsuren Castle. Aji sought advice from the oracle of the *Yijing*:

texts or images of the *Yijing*. The book was kept in the Okinawa Prefectural Library and unfortunately it was destroyed by fire during the Second World War.

³⁹ Haneji Chōshū 羽地朝秀 [Shō Shōken 向象賢], ed., *Ryūkyūkoku Chūzan seikan* 琉球国中山世鑑 (Naha: Kuniyoshi kōbundō, 1932), p. 17.

⁴⁰ Orikuchi Shinobu, *Kodai kenkyū* 古代研究 (Study of Antiquity) (Tokyo: Ōokayama shoten, 1930), vol. 1, p. 72.

⁴¹ In Iba Fuyū, Higashionna Kanjun 東恩納寛惇, and Yokoyama Shigeru 横山重, eds., *Ryūkyū shiryō sōsho* 琉球史料叢書 (Series on Historical Sources of Ryukyu), vol. 4 (Tokyo: Inoue shobō, 1962), p. 11.

His daughter said: “Although his appearance and clothing look despicable, he is indeed exceptional. He will have great fortune in the future.” Aji always believed in the cleverness of his daughter and did not want to impose his opinion on her. He told her: “If you think this way, I will use the oracle to decide.” He divined and got the sign that the daughter would become the queen. He was overjoyed and thus accepted the proposal.⁴²

The *yinyang* theory can be found everywhere in Ryukyuan folklore. According to the *Ryūkyūkoku yuraiki* 琉球国由来記 (The origin of the Ryukyu Kingdom, 1713), the Ryukyu people worshipped deities in September, because it represented the sign of decline after the appearance of *lao yang* 老陽 (old *yang* turning into *yin*). It reads: “In September, the old *yang* will turn into *yin*. Misfortune often strikes people. Hence, they pray to deities and bodhisattvas near and far for good fortune.”⁴³

There were a considerable number of *Yijing* diviners in early modern Ryukyu. Most of these *Yijing* diviners were males, but they were not as influential as female shamans. Male *Yijing* diviners were active in the southern part of the mainland, whereas female shamans were everywhere in Ryukyu, including villages and islands.⁴⁴ In the eighteenth century, the number of *Yijing* diviners suddenly increased, as many female shamans turned into *Yijing* diviners due to the official suppression of shamanism.⁴⁵ *Yijing* diviners performed many functions for the ordinary people, including fortune-telling, choosing the site for graveyard and *ishigantō* 石敢当 (protective stone), and healing.⁴⁶ As they believed in the supernatural power of the *Yijing*, they liked to hold it to pray.⁴⁷

Chinese *fengshui* had a strong impact on all walks of life in Ryukyu.⁴⁸ Li Dingyuan, in his observation during his mission to Ryukyu, maintained that the masters of *Yinyang* (*yinyangjia* 陰陽家) exerted some influence on Ryukyuan politics.⁴⁹ Kumemura sent his scholars to Qing China to study geomancy and the calendar. Sai On was one such example of a man who was sent to study

⁴² Ibid., p. 13.

⁴³ Quoted from *Ginowan shishi* 宜野湾市史 (History of Ginowan City), vol. 4 (Ginowan: Ginowan-shi, 1985), p. 89.

⁴⁴ Arne Røkkum, *Nature, Ritual, and Society in Japan's Ryukyu Islands* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 223.

⁴⁵ See Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics*, p. 116.

⁴⁶ Kubo Noritada 窪徳忠, *Chūgoku bunka to Nantō* 中国文化と南島 (Chinese culture and Southern Islands) (Tokyo: Daiichi shobō, 1981), p. 94.

⁴⁷ Kubo Noritada, *Okinawa no shūzoku to shinkō* 沖縄の習俗と信仰 (Customs and religions in Okinawa) (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1971), p. 64.

⁴⁸ See Miura Kunio 三浦国雄, *Fūsui koyomi onyōji: Chūgoku bunka no hen'en to shite no Okinawa* 風水・暦・陰陽師：中国文化の辺縁としての沖縄 (*Fengshui*, the calendar, *yinyang* priests: Okinawa at the periphery of Chinese culture) (Ginowan: Yōju shorin, 2005).

⁴⁹ *Shi Liuqiu ji*, vol. 5, p. 8.

in Fuzhou and became a *fengshui* master. Like his Chinese counterparts, he explained the nature of the land in terms of the balance of *yin* and *yang*. In the *Sanrin shinpi* 山林真秘 (Real secrets of the mountain forests), he encouraged the villagers to plant trees on gentle mountain slopes to harmonize *yin* and *yang*, because “gentle mountain slopes are neither too steep nor too flat; they are in harmony with *yin* and *yang*. For this reason, lush forest can be grown there.”⁵⁰ He held that land of pure *yang* or pure *yin* is not suitable for tree planting.⁵¹

Chinese geomancy was widely applied in different activities in Ryukyu. The *fengshui* compass used by Ryukyuan has 384 lines rather than 360 lines commonly used by the Chinese. 384 come from the multiplication of the 64 hexagrams and the six lines in the *Yijing*.⁵² In architecture, the selection of site for palace, castle, house and graveyard were all subject to *fengshui*. *Fengshui* masters looked for place where *yin* and *yang* achieved balance.⁵³ Ryukyuan medicine was strongly influenced by Chinese medicine and thus the *yingyang wuxing* principle was widely used. The Ryukyuan herbal scholar Go Keishi 吳繼志 explained the nature of herbs in Ryukyu in terms of *yinyang* in his *Shitsumon honzō* 質問本草 (Questions about herbs, 1789). For instance, epimedium “can reinforce *yang* and supplement *yin*” and “revive the way of *yang*.”⁵⁴

Concluding Remarks

The Ryukyuan studied the Chinese Classics to communicate and do business with the Chinese rather than pursue academic excellence. Although they could write in Chinese, compose Chinese poems, and communicate well with the Chinese officials and merchants, they did not write their own commentaries on the Chinese Classics.⁵⁵ They were satisfied with children’s books and morality books for the commoners and Zhu Xi’s commentaries for the scholars.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Modified from John Purves, Bixia Chen, and Yuei Nakama, trans., “The Secrets of Forestry: An English Translation of the *Sanrin Shinpi* of Sai On,” *The Science Bulletin of the Faculty of Agriculture* (University of the Ryukyus) 56 (December 2009): 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁵² Both the 384-line *fengshui* compass and the 360-line *fengshui* compass were invented in China. The former was not as popular as the latter. Ryukyu and Tsushima adopted the 384-line *fengshui* compass. See Dana Masayuki 田名真之, “Kenryū kenchi no sokuryō gijutsu to Ryūkyū kokuzu” 乾隆検地の測量技術と琉球國図 (Survey technology in the Qianlong land survey and the map of Ryukyu), in conference proceedings: *Zhongliu keji wenhua jiaoliu shi xueshi yantaohui* 中琉科技文化交流史學術研討會 (Academic conference on the history of China-Ryukyu exchanges in technology and culture), Fujian Normal University, November 19, 2010.

⁵³ Chen Jinguo 陳進國, “Fenmu xingzhi yu fengshui xinyang: Fujian yu Liuqiu (Chongsheng) de shili” 墳墓形制與風水信仰：福建與琉球（沖繩）的事例 (The forms of graves and *fengshui* belief: Using Fujian and Ryukyu (Okinawa) as examples), *Xin shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 新世界宗教研究 4:1 (September 1994): 2-54.

⁵⁴ Go Keishi, *Shitsumon honzō* (Edo: Izumiya Kichibē, 1837), inner chapters, 2, p. 29. In digital collection of Waseda University (call number 二 01 00582).

⁵⁵ In Takatsu Takashi and Chen Jie 陳捷, eds., *Liuqiu wangguo Hanwen wenxian jicheng* 琉球王國漢文文獻集成 (Index to Chinese books in the Ryukyu Kingdom) (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2013).

⁵⁶ Nakamura Shunsaku 中村春作, “Kinsei Ryūkyū to Shushigaku” 近世琉球と朱子学 (Early modern

The historical reception of the *Yijing* in the Ryukyu Kingdom reflects the nature of Ryukyuan Confucianism. The *Yijing* was much less popular than the Four Books. Ryukyuan scholars did not write any commentaries or reprint any Chinese commentaries on it. They read commentaries written by Chinese and Japanese scholars. Japan played an important role in promoting the *Yijing* in Ryukyu. In terms of *Yijing* scholarship in East Asia, Ryukyu was far behind as compared to other members of the Sinosphere, such as Japan, Korea, and Viet Nam.

The *Yijing* as a Confucian text was not popular, but was influential as an oracle manual. Its related ideas and practices had a great impact on Ryukyuan society and culture, applied to geomancy, divination, folk religion, medicine and architecture. This aspect of the *Yijing* was assimilated into Ryukyu traditions.

Ryukyu and the Zhu Xi School), in Ichiki Tsuyuhiko 市來津由彦, ed., *Edo Jugaku no Chūyō chūshaku* 江戸儒学の中庸注釈 (The interpretations of the *Zhongyong* in Edo Confucianism) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2012), p. 116.