
SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

Number 229

August, 2012

New Thoughts on an Old Controversy:

Shina as a Toponym for China

by
Joshua A. Fogel

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

FOUNDED 1986

Editor-in-Chief
VICTOR H. MAIR

Associate Editors
PAULA ROBERTS MARK SWOFFORD

ISSN
2157-9679 (print) 2157-9687 (online)

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS is an occasional series dedicated to making available to specialists and the interested public the results of research that, because of its unconventional or controversial nature, might otherwise go unpublished. The editor-in-chief actively encourages younger, not yet well established, scholars and independent authors to submit manuscripts for consideration. Contributions in any of the major scholarly languages of the world, including romanized modern standard Mandarin (MSM) and Japanese, are acceptable. In special circumstances, papers written in one of the Sinitic topolects (*fangyan*) may be considered for publication.

Although the chief focus of *Sino-Platonic Papers* is on the intercultural relations of China with other peoples, challenging and creative studies on a wide variety of philological subjects will be entertained. This series is **not** the place for safe, sober, and stodgy presentations. *Sino-Platonic Papers* prefers lively work that, while taking reasonable risks to advance the field, capitalizes on brilliant new insights into the development of civilization.

Submissions are regularly sent out to be refereed, and extensive editorial suggestions for revision may be offered.

Sino-Platonic Papers emphasizes substance over form. We do, however, strongly recommend that prospective authors consult our style guidelines at www.sino-platonic.org/stylesheet.doc. Manuscripts should be submitted as electronic files, preferably in Microsoft Word format. You may wish to use our sample document template, available here: www.sino-platonic.org/spp.dot.

Beginning with issue no. 171, *Sino-Platonic Papers* has been published electronically on the Web at www.sino-platonic.org. Issues 1–170, however, will continue to be sold as paper copies until our stock runs out, after which they too will be made available on the Web.

Please note: When the editor goes on an expedition or research trip, all operations (including filling orders) may temporarily cease for up to three months at a time. In such circumstances, those who wish to purchase various issues of *SPP* are requested to wait patiently until he returns. If issues are urgently needed while the editor is away, they may be requested through Interlibrary Loan. You should also check our Web site at www.sino-platonic.org, as back issues are regularly rereleased for free as PDF editions.

Sino-Platonic Papers is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

New Thoughts on an Old Controversy:
Shina as a Toponym for China

by Joshua A. Fogel
York University, Toronto

Zhina dizi wu yanyu

支那弟子無言語

Chuan'er huseng xiao diantou

穿耳胡僧笑點頭

*Chinese youngsters stood there speechless,
While foreign monks wearing earrings smiled and nodded.*

(From “Ti fan shu” 題梵書 [inscription to a Sanskrit work], a poem by Tang Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗, r. 712–756, describing young Chinese looking at a piece of writing in Sanskrit)

Do toponyms provide an index of the position a nation, state, or country occupies on the evolutionary scale? Scanning the world in which we now live, we can see that only a relatively small number of states have more than one name (aside from official vs. popular names), usually the result — as in the case of “China” vs. Taiwan or the two “Koreas” (although England, Great Britain, Albion, etc. would be an obvious exception) — of a heightened or strained political consciousness. By the same token, the only places such concerns are obviously operative are at the United Nations and the Olympics, and in official state documents. Journalists, writers, ordinary citizens, and others usually could not care less — usually.

How is it then that, on the eve of the 1911 Revolution, the place we now call China had any number of toponyms for itself — from the “*da Qing*” 大清 (great Qing), “*da Qing diguo*” 大清帝國 (great Qing empire), and Zhongguo 中國, to others with a more traditional resonance: Zhonghua 中華, Hua-Xia 華夏, and Zhongtu 中土? While not wanting to impose later standards

on earlier practices, there still seems to be some onomastic disorder here, as each of these terms (save “*da Qing*” and “*da Qing diguo*”) may have a slightly different nuance but would all translate into English pretty much as “China.” Perhaps this is a result of the fact that on the eve of October 1911 (and perhaps even later), “China” (any of the native toponyms will do) still conceived of itself as an empire and not as yet as a nation-state.¹ Or, perhaps shedding all of the accoutrements of one’s solipsistic conceit, as well as those of empire, is part of the process of entering the modern world of (theoretically) equal nation-states.

In what follows I want less to trace the specific steps by which “China” moved from the “great Qing dynasty” (or “empire”) to the Republic of China (Zhonghua Minguo 中華民國) and more to see how Japan perceived and/or adopted any or all of these toponyms plus one more. As arguably China’s keenest observer and, on occasion, mercurial assessor, Japan had nothing to gain or lose — toponymically speaking — from which of the various names for China would carry on and which would be swept into the dustbin. That said, harsh and often incriminating debates, larded with misconceptions and outright ignorance (which never seems to inhibit fierce assertion of a point of view), ensued over much of the twentieth century.

Generally, before the Meiji period, Japanese referred to “China” either by the name of the dynasty in power (Han 漢, J. Kan; Tang 唐, J. Tō; Song 宋, J. Sō; Ming 明, J. Min; and Qing 清, J. Shin) or by some generic name, such as the synecdoche Nankin 南京 (Nanjing) or the more Japanese-sounding terms Kara から (唐) or Morokoshi もろこし. Even today, the Chinatown section of Kōbe is known as Nankinmachi 南京町 (lit., Nanjing village, or Chinatown), just as states around the world often refer to others by the capital city (for example, Beijing, Washington, Tokyo) as a synecdoche for the entire nation or at least its government. Other generic Japanese terms included Chūka 中華 (C. Zhonghua; Yokohama’s and Nagasaki’s Chinatowns are today known as Chūkagai 中華街), Chūdo 中土 (C. Zhongtu), Ka-Ka 華夏 (C. Hua-Xia), and (of

* An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the conference “From Qing to China: Rethinking the Interplay of Tradition and Modernity, 1860–1949,” organized by Professor Ori Sela at Tel Aviv University, May 2012.

¹ See Peter C. Perdue, “Where Do Incorrect Political Ideas Come From? Writing the History of the Qing Empire and the Chinese Nation,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 174–99.

course) *Shina* 支那 (C. *Zhina*), just to name a few. Although the Japanese rendering of the term now used by the Chinese themselves, *Chūgoku* 中國, was on occasion employed in Japanese texts, it appeared with far less frequency. That term, incidentally, dates to the Zhou when it meant those "central states" which most assiduously followed the rituals associated with the Zhou dynasty; it apparently underwent a lexical shift at some post-antique time to mean a unified "Chinese" state/empire.

The use of dynastic names is more complicated than it appears at first blush. Indeed, such toponyms were in use at the time these dynasties ruled, but only an elite selection from them retained the staying power to be used for "China" or "Chinese" in a more general, trans-temporal sense long after those dynasties ceased to exist. Actually, straight through until the very end of the Han dynasty in 220 C.E., we know of no Japanese writings of any sort, as Japan was still a pre-literate society at the time. This means that the entire life of "Kan" (at least in written form) has existed *après le fait*: for example, "Kangaku" 漢學 was the name in Japan for "China studies" for many centuries and not just *Hanxue* (Han-style learning or scholarship) most often associated with the late Ming and Qing eras in scholarship. Now that term's generic sensibility (meaning all of China studies, not just of a style associated with the Han dynasty) has acquired cachet as such in China and Taiwan. (Lest it go unnoticed, the same process has transpired with the term *Kanji* 漢字, in which "Kan" has stood in for all things "Chinese," and that term has made the trip back to China now as well: *Hanzi*. There are probably many other examples, such as *Kanbun/Hanwen* 漢文, too.)

Equally productive as a dynastic toponym for China has been "Tō," and here the association with the real, experienced Tang dynasty is critical. During the three centuries of Tang, several thousand Japanese students, religious and secular, traveled to and around China, often for decades.² The image conveyed back to the home islands was one of utter magnificence, a

² There are many books and articles in Japanese and increasingly in Chinese on this subject, though scarcely a word in English. I have found excellent, readable, and quite handy: Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之, *Ken-Tō shi* 遣唐使 (Embassies sent to Tang China) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2007); for a convenient chart of these embassies with names of their leaders and incidental information, see my *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese Relations in Space and Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 101–7, and online at:

centralized kingdom running like a massive Swiss watch on an equally powerful battery — pardon the anachronism. Song (Sō), Ming (Min), and Qing (Shin) — as far as I am aware — ceased to have any staying power when those dynasties ceased to exist. Is it significant that “Han” and “Tang” are just as important as ethnonyms (especially in China — e.g., Hanren 漢人) as they are as toponyms and modifiers? Chinatowns in Western cities are often, as in the case of San Francisco, known in Chinese as Tangrenjie 唐人街. Is this because the great majority of their inhabitants, at least at the time the term was coined, were from Guangdong?

The one Japanese expression used for China for centuries, but especially over the century from late Edo through 1945, *Shina*, has been the one that has most exercised Chinese opinion. It has caused what can only be dubbed fits of irrationality and binational name-calling, although a calming trend seems to have been setting in. That said, the following incident from 2010, as reported in that bastion of political equipoise, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, is telling. That year a patron in a shop in Beijing objected strongly to a poster hanging there depicting a scene from prewar Shanghai in which the word “*Shina*” appeared; it appears to my eye to be a blown-up version of a postcard. For this patron the word set off associations of Japanese aggression and Chinese “national shame,” and he believed it denigrated China and the Chinese people. Once this story became known, reporters descended on the shop in question, noted this poster among a few on the walls there, and then asked a scholar at the Institute of Modern History at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for an opinion. He understood full well the cachet attached to these pictures of “old Shanghai,” but “they should not have used the photos that are open to various interpretations [Heaven forbid!]. If the company aims to remind the Chinese of the national shame, the meaning of the picture is not clear.”³ (Only clear messages, please!)

This state of affairs actually marks an improvement over previous decades in which even such marginal acceptance would have been impossible. But why such strong feelings over two all but meaningless characters? Without giving away too much of the game, the animus has a lot to do with the prewar years, China’s “national shame,” Japan’s success in the postwar years, and,

<http://chinajapan.org/resources/j-to-tang.html>.

³ <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90782/7090148.html>.

of course, the inability to control iron-fistedly what others call you. Toponyms and ethnonyms are obviously not value-free entities; in fact, they often ironically tell us precisely what they do not denote, such as the "German Democratic Republic."

Let us first look at the debate as it emerged in the 1940s and 1950s and then examine its longer and broader context. The first Japanese to address this issue squarely was the remarkable scholar of Chinese literature, Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹内好 (1908–1977), who has been exhumed in recent years particularly by postmodernists to serve causes with which I doubt he would have had much truck. Writing in the late 1930s and early 1940s for the journal *Chūgoku bungaku* 中國文學 (Chinese literature), probably the only prewar Japanese publication to use the Chinese toponym for "China" (in its Japanese reading, of course), Takeuchi offered by far the most insightful remarks for his time. How do we respond, he asked, to the claim by Chinese that the expressions "Shina" 支那 and "Shinajin" 支那人 (a/the Chinese) are insulting? Whatever its pre-modern origins, to be discussed below, did the fact that in contemporary usage "Shina" was a designation of foreign origin (different from the toponym of Chinese choice) imply that China had been denied an equal place in the world? By the same token, how in the modern world of independent nations could other countries be expected to refer to China by a name that conjured up a bygone world view based on clear lines of inequity with China at the center of the universe (Zhongguo 中國)? One might raise just as much doubt about whether "Shina" carried negative connotations simply in its usage as one could with Chinese use of the term "Zhongguo" (Chūgoku). I would add: Just imagine if a new nation were today to decide to baptize itself "Center of the World" and demand that the United Nations and all states with which it had relations call it just that. (Now imagine if that new state had copious oil or other mineral reserves.)

As was so often the case in modern Chinese linguistic innovations, it was Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1874–1929) who pioneered the reformulation of "Zhongguo" as a modern national designation for China. Others may have preceded him, but not in the consistent way by which he attempted to forge such a designation shorn of its earlier trappings. Yet it was this same Liang Qichao who on many earlier occasions had used the Chinese correlate of "Shina": "Zhina." In the inaugural issue (December 23, 1898) of the serial *Qingyi bao* 清議報, which he famously

began publishing in Japan shortly after arriving there, he wrote: “Alas, the dangers to the state of our China (Zhina 支那) have now reached an extreme.” He then went on to list briefly four tasks that confronted all like-minded people concerned for China’s future, and the term Zhina appears exclusively — no Zhongguo and, of course, no Qingguo (correlate of a Japanese term in use, Shinkoku 清國). This is especially interesting because in the run-up to the 1898 Reform Movement, he had been using Zhongguo in his pieces for *Shiwu bao* 時務報. With the failure of that movement and his taking refuge in Japan, he began replacing Zhongguo with Zhina. As a pioneer in introducing all the new Japanese neologisms into the Chinese language, Shina/Zhina had a fresh cachet about it, even if he may have known its linguistic origins in medieval times. There is ultimately no way for us to know his actual reasoning on this matter, but it is clear that he made the switch promptly — and completely, at least initially.⁴

Eventually, however, he returned to using Zhongguo. Writing in 1900, Liang explained his thinking a bit:

Initially, was our China (Zhongguo) in antiquity a state? Or, was it just a dynastic court? We descendents of the Yellow Emperor have lived on the globe as a group for several thousand years, but when asked what the name of this land is, we have none. Tang, Yu, Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing are all dynastic names. A dynasty is the private property of a single family, whereas a land (*guo* 國) is the jointly held property of a people.... The China of which I speak has not as yet appeared, but at present it has just begun to sprout. Heaven and earth are immense, and the future far, far off. How magnificent will our young China be!⁵

⁴ See *Shiwubao* 1 (1896), as discussed in Saitō Mareshi 齋藤希史, “‘Shina’ sairon” 「支那」再論 (A reconsideration of “Shina”), in *Kyōsei kara tekитай e, daiyonkai Nit-Chū kankei shi kokusai shinpojiumu ronbunshū* 共生から敵対へ、第四回日中関係史国際シンポジウム論文集 (From coexistence to antagonism: Essays from the fourth international symposium on the history of Sino-Japanese relations), ed. Etō Shinkichi 江藤藩吉 (Tokyo: Tōhō shoten, 2000), pp. 226–27, 231.

⁵ Liang Qichao, “Shaonian Zhongguo shuo” 少年中國說 (On a young China), *Qingyi bao* 36 (1900), in *Yinbingshi*

(且我中國疇昔.豈嘗有國家哉.不過有朝廷耳.我黃帝子孫.聚族而居.立於此地球之上者既數千年.而問其國之為何名.則無有也.夫所謂唐.虞.夏.商.周.秦.漢.魏.晉.宋.齊.梁.陳.隋.唐.宋.元.明.清者則皆朝名耳.朝也者.一家之私產也.國也者.人民之公產也.於吾所謂中國者何與焉.然則吾中國者.前此尚未出現於世界.而今乃始萌芽雲爾.天地大矣.前途遼矣.美哉.我少年中國乎.)

Obviously, there was no derogation intended in Liang’s usage, just an effort to overcome mere dynastic names (which could always be counted on to change) with a generic toponym but one also that could have life breathed into it anew. The process by which “Zhongguo” became the established, generic term and “Zhina” dropped out of currency in Chinese would seem to have more to do with the development of anti-Japanese sentiments in twentieth-century China than with the intrinsic and relative linguistic values of these two terms. The most outspoken opponent of “Shina” was, doubtless, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978) who railed against it, to the point of noting that in multiple national designations (such as “Sino-Japanese” in English) Japanese newspapers always placed the element for China (the “Shi” of “Shina”) last: thus, “Nis-Shi” 日支 (Sino-Japanese), “Nichi-Ei-Shi” 日英支 (Japanese-English-Chinese), and the like.

Takeuchi found this line of argument utterly specious. “Shina” was the term to which he had become accustomed when writing in his native language; and, even if words do take on a life of their own, it had not a trace of ridicule attached to it, he claimed, in his usage. China and the Chinese people, as far as Takeuchi was concerned, could not be reduced to words. In addition, all of these discussions were meaningless to the everyday, ordinary people Takeuchi had come to know in the years he spent in China. How knowledgeable were those people who had suggested replacing “Shina” with “Chūgoku” with the actual feelings of the Chinese people about the term “Shina?” How confident were they that the term “Chūgoku” could be inserted into the quotidian Japanese lexicon? Would simply changing the term to “Chūgoku” insure that any alleged abuse inherent in the former term “Shina” disappear? Was this not like humoring a child? “Must we love the Chinese people?” he asked. I may love certain Chinese, he claimed, but it is not simply

heji, wenji 飲冰室合集、文集 (Collected writings from the Ice-Drinker’s Studio, essays) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 5: 9–10. See also Saitō Mareshi, pp. 228–29.

because they are “Chinese.” “I couldn’t care less whether you say ‘Shina,’ ‘Chūgoku,’ or whether you spell out ‘Zhongguo’ in *katakana*. I don’t wish to believe that this is simply a problem of language.”⁶

Takeuchi was not the only Japanese concerned with this issue before the end of the war, just arguably the most perceptive. In the postwar period, he came to grips with the change in toponyms and accepted Chūgoku, but he insisted that this not only did not solve any problem of residual bad feelings of Japanese toward China — it actually might serve just to cover it up. And, it also covered up the question of why the Chinese had come so thoroughly to detest Shina. As he understood it at this point, Chinese antipathy for the toponym Shina only arose with the rise of Chinese nationalism in the face of Japanese imperialism in the 1910s, spreading further in the 1920s — that is, the Nationalist era when “Japanese government, newspapers, people all simply ignored the demands of Chinese nationalism.... The root of this evil was a historical legacy of belittling Chinese nationalism.”⁷

A fascinating exchange, which would seem to have been altogether unaware of earlier discussions of this issue, transpired in the pages of the *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞 in December 1952. The renowned Sinologist, Aoki Masaru 青木正児 (1887–1964), was struck by the sudden shift in usage, following the end of the war, from Shina to Chūgoku in Japan, and he was at a loss to understand why the Chinese apparently so hated the term Shina. True, he agreed, the term as utilized by many Japanese had accrued a negative nuance, but there was nothing intrinsically derogatory about it, despite Chinese arguments to the contrary. The two-character expression derived, he argued, from an early Sanskrit transcription of “Qin” 秦, the ancient dynastic name which had become associated beyond China’s borders with the country’s name, much as

⁶ Takeuchi Yoshimi, “Shina to Chūgoku” 支那と中國 (“Shina” and “Chūgoku”), *Chūgoku bungaku* 64 (August 1940), as reprinted in his *Nihon to Chūgoku no aida* 日本と中国のあいだ (Between Japan and China) (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1973), pp. 178–83, quotation on p. 185. See also his “Shina o kaku to iu koto” 支那を書くということ (On writing the term “Shina”), *Chūgoku bungaku* 80 (January 1942), as reprinted in *Nihon to Chūgoku no aida*, pp. 222–26

⁷ Cited in Saitō Mareshi, “‘Shina’ sairon,” in *Kyōsei kara tekитай e, daiyonkai Nit-Chū kankei shi kokusai shinpojiumu ronbunshū*, pp. 219–20.

Han/Kan (and Tang/Tō) later would become in Japan. There was certainly nothing inherently evil about the two characters — they were just phonograms with no nuance attached — nor was there anything evil in the initial Japanese adoption of the term (from the Chinese from the Sanskrit).

Aoki claimed simply that many Japanese preferred some generic toponym for the country of China over the name of a specific state or regime, such as “Zhonghua minguo” 中華民國 (J. Chūka minkoku) after 1912, just as had been the case under the Ming and Qing dynasties earlier. Indeed, the expression *Shina* often appeared for China in the Buddhist canon, as did various other two-character transcriptional approximations for however the character “Qin” was pronounced at that time.⁸ Actually, Aoki averred, the several theories for what those two characters for “*Shina*” might imply — “country where the people have much on their minds,” “country of civilization,” and the like — all clearly indicated praise, not derision, for China. Many Japanese expressions had been developed as designations for China, and *Shina* — a term significantly not of Japanese innovation — could be traced back to at least the Kamakura period in Japanese usage. It became current late in the Edo era through the writings of Dutch Studies scholars (see below) and even more so through the Meiji era. In fact, it had even been adopted by some Western scholars (for this no proof is presented). Clearly, even if the term was perceived by Chinese as loaded with negative connotations, he concluded, there was no such original intent on the part of the Japanese who adopted it.⁹

Two weeks later an exceedingly angry reply by Liu Shengguang 劉勝光, a Chinese journalist in Tokyo, was published in the same newspaper. Repeating entire paragraphs from Aoki’s piece, Liu interspersed his rebuttals. Yes, he began, Japanese had chosen at the time of the Qing to refer to China by what they took to be the dynastic designation, rather than a generic toponym; but, they had gotten it wrong. The term used by Japanese was *Shinkoku* (C. *Qingguo*) or “Qing nation,” when it should have been *Shinchō* 清朝 (C. *Qingchao*) or “Qing dynasty.” The

⁸ For a detailed examination of the etymology of the term “*Shina*,” see Uemura Nizaburō 植村仁三郎, “*Shina meigi kō*” 支那名義考 (A study of the meaning of the term “*Shina*”), *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 7, *furoku* 附錄 (supplement), attached to 7.11 (November 1896), pp. 1–16; and to 7.12 (December 1896), pp. 17–40.

⁹ Aoki Masaru, “‘*Shina*’ to iu meishō ni tsuite” 「支那」という名称について (On the term “*Shina*”), *Asahi shinbun*, December 17, 1952, p. 6.

former had never existed; there was no such animal as the "Qing nation." Liu admitted that Aoki had cleverly marshaled numerous old references where "Shina" had a positive or neutral connotation, but the simple fact, Liu declared, was that when Chinese people saw those two characters, Shina, they saw Japanese militarists and imperialism. And, he denied "absolutely" that any other foreigners had ever used the expression Shina; it was only the Japanese!

Liu went on to cite a passage written by Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石 (1887–1975), who must have known Japanese well at an earlier stage in his life, in which the Generalissimo claimed that the term itself sounded like "a person at death's door," apparently because of its similarity to the Japanese verb *shinu* 死ぬ 'to die' (more precisely, *shina* 死な was the negative root of the verb *shinu*). Indeed, Liu claimed, the use of the term seemed to deny the very life of China. It was thus extremely humiliating to Chinese. "I can say with surety that this expression [Shina] absolutely does not appear in Chinese books." He concluded with a note indicating what must have touched off this discussion. In recent Sino-Japanese negotiations, Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878–1967), wartime foreign minister and postwar prime minister (following the American Occupation's "reverse course") with decidedly rightwing views, had occasionally misspoken "Shina," indicating a pre-1945 mentality and education and causing considerable offense.¹⁰

We have here two clear, polar statements of the arguments over the nuances (intended and unintended) of this particular Japanese designation for "China." It is part of one of the more confusing stories in the development of Japanese Sinology and Japanese views of China generally. First of all, as we have seen above and will see further below, Liu Shengguang was dead wrong about Chinese never having used "Zhina." Although it never emerged as the default term for "China," it was used by many different Chinese. Sanetō Keishū 實藤惠秀 (1896–1985) reports an instructive story dating to 1907. In that year's graduating class from Waseda University, ninety-five students from "China" signed some sort of commemorative ledger. Most did not indicate a country of origin, but of the thirty-seven who did, eighteen listed "Zhina," twelve gave "Qingguo," and only seven wrote either "Zhongguo" or "Zhonghua." He suggests

¹⁰ Liu Shengguang, "Chūgoku ni wa nai kotoba, 'Shina' ni tsuite hanron" 中国にはない言葉、「支那」について反論 (A rebuttal concerning "Shina," a word that does not exist in China), *Asahi shinbun*, December 30, 1952, p. 6.

that “Zhina” was a way of implicitly rejected the Manchu-Qing state, thus indicating a revolutionary mentality.¹¹ “Zhina” was as well later to be found in the name of a Republican-period Buddhist school, “Zhina neixueyuan” 支那內學院 (Chinese Inner Studies Institute), founded in 1922 by Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸 (1871–1943) and Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989) in Nanjing with funds from Zhang Binglin 張炳麟 (1868–1936), Liang Qichao, and Xiong Xiling 熊希齡 (1870–1937), among others; it continued in existence until 1952, although its name changed to “Zhongguo neixueyuan” 中國內學院 in 1949.¹² (There was even a “Zhina gongchandang” 支那共產黨 or Chinese Communist Party, not to be confused with the “real” one, in the early 1920s, and the young Shi Cuntong 施存統 [1899–1970] used the term Zhina in proselytizing for a socialist revolution in his homeland.)¹³ Liu was also wrong to assume that the Japanese were alone in using Shinkoku, as at least one Chinese association of overseas students used that expression (C. Qingguo) in its title.

The unspoken thrust of Liu’s vituperative was the simple fact that the Japanese did not (jump through the proper hoops and) use the Chinese term of choice, an unspoken but nonetheless clear indication that they had not accepted the fact that they lost the war and were now required to take their marching orders from the former Allies (including China). Electing this option meant that they were no better than recalcitrant children. The Japanese had come in the prewar era to use *Shina* as naturally as Anglophones came to use its cognate “China,” but

¹¹ Summarized in Saitō Mareshi, “‘Shina’ sairon,” in *Kyōsei kara tekитай e, daiyonkai Nit-Chū kankei shi kokusai shinpojiumu ronbunshū*, p. 214. Clearly, Sanetō was at pains to explain away any Chinese use of “Zhina” in a positive light, though this by no means eviscerates his argument.

¹² Shi Dongchu 釋東初, *Zhongguo Fojiao jindai shi* 中國佛教近代史 (History of modern Chinese Buddhism), in *Dongchu laoren quanji* 東初老人全集 (Collected works of Old Man [Su] Dongchu) (Taipei: Dongchu, 1974), 1: 205–6.

¹³ Ishikawa Yoshihiro 石川禎浩, *Chūgoku Kyōsantō seiritsu shi* 中國共產黨成立史 (History of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), p. 145. On its leader, Zhang Minquan 張民權, an Esperantist and anarchist, see Ishikawa, pp. 383–84. One example of Shi Cuntong’s use of the term appears in: CT (Shi Cuntong), “Women yao zenmeyang gan shehui geming?” 我們要怎麼樣幹社會革命 (How are we going to make the social revolution?), *Gongchandang* 共產黨 5 (June 1921), as cited in Ishikawa, p. 323.

there was no hue and cry about that. Now that Japan had been thoroughly defeated in the war, it was time to pile on.

It was time for a thorough study of the Japanese use of the term *Shina* across all genres of texts from the Edo period through the early Shōwa decades — easier said than done, indeed a massive undertaking. Nonetheless, Satō Saburō 佐藤三郎 (1912–2006) set out to do just that several decades ago. He examined a multiplicity of texts over these years in an effort to describe, first, the emergence and predominance of *Shina* and, second, its subsequent supersession by *Chūgoku*.¹⁴

Satō demonstrates conclusively that there was no consistency in the Japanese use of terms for “China” before *bakumatsu* 幕末 times (last years of the Edo period, 1600–1868). Indeed, one often finds two or more different expressions for China in the same text. *Shina* was rarely used prior to the middle years of the Edo period, and the *bakufu* usually used *Tō*. When Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) employed the term *Shina* in 1713, it carried only positive connotations. Hakuseki had heard a cognate of the word in his 1709 interrogations of the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1668–1714) who had (unsuccessfully) tried the previous year to enter Japan illegally while the ban on Christianity was in force; he was soon arrested and died in prison in Japan six years later. Hakuseki noted that the word Sidotti used for China (presumably, Italian “Cina”), which Hakuseki rendered as “Chiina” チイナ, was cognate with *Shina*, and thereafter he used the latter word himself as a toponym for China irrespective of dynasty, just as the word “China” is used in English.¹⁵ At the time “*Shina*” was believed to reflect an Indian

¹⁴ Satō Saburō, “Nihonjin ga Chūgoku-o *Shina* to yonda koto ni tsuite no kōsatsu” 日本人が中国を支那と呼んだことについての考察 (A study of the Japanese use of [the term] *Shina* for China), in his *Kindai Nit-Chū kōshō shi no kenkyū* 近代日中交渉史の研究 (Studies in the history of modern Sino-Japanese relations) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1984), pp. 25–66.

¹⁵ Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), pp. 328–29. On the basis of his questioning of Sidotti, Hakuseki wrote both *Seiyō kibun* 西洋紀聞 (Chronicle of the West) and *Sairan igen* 采覽異言 (Strange stories acquired). There is a question about what language Hakuseki would have used to question Sidotti, and the involvement of the Dutch interpreters in Nagasaki as well as the Dutch themselves (who may have known Latin) is fair to assume, although Hakuseki claims to have been able to make out what Sidotti was saying (highly doubtful).

pronunciation of the toponym for China that Buddhist travelers, such as Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 596–664) and others, had often used many centuries earlier. It was thought to have derived from the dynastic name Qin and carry the sense of a vast, unified empire.¹⁶ For Buddhists of the Six Dynasties period, when Buddhism spread widely in China and Chinese traveled in ever greater numbers to India to acquire the texts of the religion firsthand, the term *Zhongguo* was reserved for India,¹⁷ as the central land on the map, thus requiring a different name for their own homeland. According to Fayun 法雲 (twelfth century), a Chinese monk of the Song period, the term implied a “nation of culture” (*wenwu guo* 文物國) and was originally a term of high praise, which was how it had been understood in China. By the eighteenth century, no Chinese were

Concerning Hakuseki and this usage in the context of Japanese world geographies of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, see Torii Yumiko 鳥井裕美子, “Kinsei Nihon no Ajia ninshiki” 近世日本のアジア認識 (Early modern Japanese perceptions of Asia), in *Kōsaku suru Ajia* 交錯するアジア (Asia entangled), ed. Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, Hamashita Takeshi 浜下武志, Hiraishi Naoaki 平石直昭, and Miyajima Hiroshi 宮島博史 (Tokyo University Press, 1993), vol. 1 of a 7-volume series, *Ajia kara kangaeru* アジアから考える (Reconsiderations from Asia), pp. 226–27, 234–38.

¹⁶ Some years ago, a fascinating article on this issue was published in China’s leading historical journal, though it has gone (almost) totally ignored. In a study of the origins of the two-character expression pronounced “Zhina” in Chinese, Su Zhongxiang 苏仲湘 argues (with immense amounts of supportive evidence) that originally it was indeed an “Indian” (i.e., Sanskrit) effort to transcribe the name for China. But, although it dates to the Qin era, the term derives not from a reading of “Qin” but from the Chinese rendering for the ancient state of Jing 荆, much revered by those who wrote the documents in which “Zhina” first appeared; in fact, it was emblematic of the entire Chinese mainland itself to them, an ancient synecdoche, if you will. Second, it was south China to which the term principally pointed, that part of China with which Indians who came to China had the closer contact. Finally, Su argues on the basis of an analysis of the ancient pronunciations of the Chinese characters involved, Jing is the better candidate. Although Su gets a little carried away at the end of his essay, lauding the greatness and wonders of Sino-foreign contacts even way back when—and concluding “Oh, how this makes our thoughts go back in time!”—still this is one of the best pieces on the subject. Also, there is conspicuously no mention of the Japanese reflex “Shina” anywhere in this essay. See Su Zhongxiang, “Lun ‘Zhina’ yici de qiuyuan yu Jing de lishi he wenhua” 论「支那」一词的起源与荆的历史和文化 (On the origins of the term “Zhina” and the history and culture of [the state of] Jing), *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 4 (April 1979), pp. 34–48.

¹⁷ See Xiaofei Tian, *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), p. 97.

using the term any longer, although Hakuseki held a reverential attitude toward China and could only have used it in a positive sense.

Nonetheless, “Shina” did not come into regular usage until the nineteenth century. And, interestingly, it may have been scholars of Dutch Learning with special expertise in the modern discipline of geography who played the most significant role here. The map of the world drawn in Holland (and presumably those elsewhere in Western Europe) did not resemble the conception of the world derived in China, and Dutch influence served in its way to relativize Japanese views of China’s place *in* the world geographically. Dutch Learning scholars in Japan thus began to use “Shina” in place of those toponyms — such as *Chūka* or *Chūgoku* — that stressed China’s universal centrality. Three examples should suffice. Writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 (1733–1817) noted: “The earth is one big sphere with numerous countries distributed around it. Every one of them [believes] the place they inhabit is at the center.... Shina, too, is a small country in a corner of the Eastern Sea.” Shortly thereafter, Maeno Ryōtaku 前野良澤 (1723–1803) wrote: “Ever since high antiquity, China has changed dynasties in power any number of times, and it has had no specific name throughout that time. ‘Shina’ is what people in the lands of the West — Europe and India — call it, which is just like our use of the expression ‘Morokoshi,’ in use from past to present. Thus, I use it [Shina].” And, in a similar vein, Ōtsuki Gentaku 大槻玄澤 (1757–1827) would note: “‘Shina’ is a name from the countries of the West for the land from past to present now inhabited by the Qing dynasty. The pronunciation of its [two characters] has been set by translators. Thus, at present I shall use this place name.”¹⁸

It should be noted that Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century, building on their Catholic predecessors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, doggedly stressed the idea of a spherical Earth. The outside of a sphere — where people lived and countries claimed terrain —

¹⁸ Sugita Genpaku, *Kyōi no gen* 狂醫之言 (Words of a crazed doctor); Maeno Ryōtaku, *Kanrei higen* 管蠡祕言 (Secret words about narrow views); Ōtsuki Gentaku, *Rangaku kaitei* 蘭學階梯 (Introduction to Dutch Learning). All can be found in Numata Jirō 沼田次郎, Matsumura Akira 松村明, and Satō Shōsuke 佐藤昌介, eds., *Nihon shisō taikēi 64: Yōgaku jō* 日本思想大系 64 : 洋學上 (Compendium of Japanese thought, vol. 64: Western Learning, part 1) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976): pp. 227–43, 127–80, and 317–72, respectively.

had no center. All spots were equal from a geographical point of view. It has been strongly suggested that William Medhurst, a Protestant missionary, purposefully placed a globe of the Earth in the guestroom of his quarters in Shanghai as a reminder of such to his Chinese visitors.¹⁹

To count the number of times the various terms for China were used in all Japanese texts is virtually impossible, but Satō examines one large body of sources, the collections of accounts written by people who were shipwrecked during the Edo period and found themselves washed up on Chinese soil. Since travel to China was illegal under the *kaikin* 海禁 (maritime restrictions or seclusion; also known later as *sakoku* 鎖國) policy, these accounts were effectively the only primary materials concerning China by Japanese at the time. His conclusions show that, although there were as many as eleven individual terms for China and somewhat fewer for the Chinese people, the overwhelming favorites were Tōkoku 唐國 (or similar terms with Tō as the first element, such as Tōdo 唐土) and Tōjin 唐人, respectively. Although *Shina* was at the time a scholarly or technical term for China, it was rarely used to designate the real thing.

During the early and mid-nineteenth century, use of *Shina* began to increase, and its connotation began to decline, according to Satō. In a famous letter of 1855, for example, Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830–1859) referred to “*Shina*” as an object for Japan to conquer (though, it should be added, the word itself was not distinctive in this way); earlier, in 1808, Satō Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵 (1769–1850) offered high praise for the Qing government and encouraged close Sino-Japanese ties, but only fifteen years later he was calling for the Japanese conquest and annexation of “*Shina*.” During the same period, however, Yokoi Shonan 横井小南 (1809–1869) was urging close ties between “*Shina*” and Japan, and clearly the term did carry a negative sense for him. While it is rather easier to understand how the general image of China was declining in Japanese eyes during the age of Western encroachment, defeat in war with the British and the French, the Taiping Rebellion, and the like, it still remains difficult to explain why during these years the use of *Shina* increased. The diarists and chroniclers aboard the *Senzaimaru* 千歳丸

¹⁹ Liu Jianhui 劉建輝, *Mato Shanghai, Nihon chishikijin no “kindai” taiken* 魔都上海：日本知識人の「近代」体験 (Demon capital Shanghai, the “modern” experience of Japanese intellectuals) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000), pp. 78, 107–8; English translation by Joshua A. Fogel, *Demon Capital Shanghai: The “Modern” Experience of Japanese Intellectuals* (Portland, Me: MerwinAsia, 2012), pp. 62–63, 87–88.

voyage of 1862, the first legal Japanese trip to China in several centuries, often used “Shina” as well as Shin (Qing) and Tōkoku, and from that point forward it seemed to carry the special sense of “contemporary China.”²⁰

In the early Meiji period, elementary school textbooks and newspapers often glossed the two Chinese characters now pronounced “Shina” with a variety of *furigana* expressions: *Chaina* チャイナ, *Kara* から, *Nankin* ナンキン, as well as *Shina* しな. This would indicate that there was still no fixed reading for the Chinese characters, but, as the term Nis-Shi 日支 (Sino-Japanese) came into currency, Shina became the preferred reading.

Satō examines four kinds of written materials for the early and mid-Meiji era. First, in official government documents, Shina was used, but so too were “Kando” 漢土, Tōkoku, and Shinkoku. Gradually, Shina and Shinkoku became the general terms and were often employed in the same documents. Second, diaries and letters also preserved the dual usage of Shina and Shinkoku — if only to avoid redundancy. Third, newspapers were using Shina widely by the second decade of Meiji (1877–1886); through an analysis of articles from selected years, he shows that Shina predominates and that the only other name used for China was Shin (with Shinkoku as a variant). Finally, as noted above, the Chinese characters for “Shina” were in wide use in textbooks, though not always glossed with the pronunciation “Shina.”

These four genres of writings demonstrate that Shina had already become entrenched, though not unilaterally, in popular Japanese usage by the mid-1880s, certainly well before the Sino-Japanese War. Satō thus successfully supersedes the argument made some years ago by Sanetō Keishū that Shina came into general use only after the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895.²¹ Until the end of the Meiji era, which happened to coincide with the end of the Qing

²⁰ Satō mentions the interesting case of one of the earlier shipwrecked Japanese by the name of Hamada Hikoza 濱田彦藏 (1837–1897), who was picked up by an American ship, taken to the United States, educated and naturalized there. He later returned to Yokohama, with the new name of Joseph Heco, where he inaugurated Japan’s first modern newspaper; he always used the terms Shina and Shinajin in his paper. Satō suggests that the reinforcing influence of the English term “China” on his usage, and perhaps eventually on general Japanese usage.

²¹ See Sanetō Keishū, *Kindai Nit-Chū kōshō shiwa* 近代日中交渉史話 (History of modern Sino-Japanese relations) (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1973), p. 87.

dynasty, the official Japanese designation for China remained *dai Shin teikoku* 大清帝國, and this usage is reflected in the Japanese names for such major events of the day as *Nis-Shin sensō* 日清戦争 (Sino-Japanese War [of 1894–1895]) and *Hoku-Shin jihen* 北清事變 (North China Incident, namely the Boxer Uprising).

From 1912, however, “Shin” ceased to have meaning as a generic designation for China, and *Shina* finally attained complete dominance, which it held until 1945. The official Chinese designation for the Republic, *Zhonghua minguo*, never came into wide use in Japan, as even official Japanese documents usually used the expressions *Shina kyōwakoku* 支那共和國 (a direct Japanese translation of “Republic of China”) or simply *Shina*. That “Shin” dropped out of usage virtually overnight should not be taken as self-evident just because the Qing dynasty ceased to exist. Long after both the Han and Tang dynasties, Han/Kan and Tang/Tō continued in use, as we have seen, and indeed right down until today in certain well circumscribed areas. The fact that Qing represented in the popular imagination the dynasty of the Manchus may help explain its quick disappearance or lack of relevance. It would be going too far, however, to assume that the Japanese were relieved in 1912 to be rid of “Shin” and its Manchu overlords and to celebrate the return of China to the Shinajin. By the same token, centuries earlier, Gen 元 (Yuan) was used either for the *dai Gen* 大元 (great Yuan dynasty of the Mongols) or for Genkō 元寇 (“Mongol” pirates or invaders who attacked Japan several times in the thirteenth century). The confluence of ethnonyms and toponyms can get very muddy.

Before looking at Satō’s discussion of the debate over the nuances of the term *Shina*, let me add a few historical observations to its background. The national renewal in Japan occasioned by the ousting of the Tokugawa shogunate and the return of the symbol of the emperor to center stage at the beginning of the Meiji period brought a concomitant decrease in respect for China in many quarters. If Japan had been able to withstand the pressures of Western encroachment, why had the considerably bigger and theoretically more powerful China apparently failed so miserably to do the same? How could such a country still consider itself the “Central Kingdom?” Central to what? The earliest Japanese allowed to travel to China after the lifting of the *sakoku* ban returned with mixed reports, but the overall picture was not an especially pretty one, even if the Chinese people were not to be blamed for the obvious decline of their country. The growing

disrespect for Japan’s former teacher in the ways of civilization found popular expression in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s 福澤諭吉 (1834–1901) derisive call to *datsu-A* 脱亜 or “escape from Asia” in the mid-1880s. At the same time, popular expressions of derogation for the Chinese people, such as “Chan chan bōzu” チャンチャン坊主, appeared more frequently in Japan and to be used with respect to the ethnic Chinese living in Japan’s larger cities.²²

Let us now take a closer look at the elusive problem of the nuances that accrued to the expression *Shina* as used by Japanese. Through the third decade of the Meiji era, Chinese scholars were feted whenever they visited Japan by their counterparts in *Kangaku* 漢學 or scholarly Chinese studies; they exchanged Chinese-style poems (*Kanshi* 漢詩) and engaged in countless “brush conversations” (*hitsudan* 筆談, or *C. bitan*). At least through these years and in these circles, *Shina* retained its generally positive connotations. Meanwhile, a continued spread in use of the term *Shina* from the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji eras forward coincided with great tumult on the Asian mainland and increasing Japanese intellectual fascination with Western civilization. From these sources, the negative connotations of filth, ineptitude, laziness, and weakness seemed to agglutinate to the term “*Shina*.” This perspective on *Shina*, though, remained latent until after the humiliating Japanese defeat of China in 1895. That victory transformed the view of Japan held by a generation of Chinese intellectuals and spurred thousands to go study there. The first group of thirteen Chinese students arrived in March 1897, and by April four of them were already back in Japan, victims of bad food and the ridicule of Japanese school children, they claimed.²³

²² Yamane Yukio 山根幸夫, “Nihonjin no Chūgoku kan” 日本人の中国観 (Japanese views of China), *Tōkyō joshi daigaku ronshū* 東京女子大学論集 (September 1968), pp. 1–2. Unexpectedly, Fukuzawa has enjoyed a largely positive reappraisal in the newly rising economies of East and Southeast Asia today, including the People’s Republic of China; see Imanaga Seiji 今永清二, “‘Datsu-A ron’ to Chūgoku bunkatsuron ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: Fukuzawa shisō no gendai teki igi o megutte” 「脱亜論」と中国分割論に関する一考察：福沢思想の現代的意義をめぐって (A study of the thesis of “escape from Asia” and the partition of China: On the contemporary awareness of Fukuzawa’s thought), *Kindai Nihon kenkyū* 近代日本研究 2 (1985), pp. 261–90.

²³ See Paula Harrell, *Sowing the Seeds of Change: Chinese Students, Japanese Teachers, 1895–1905* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

Although originally derived from Chinese Buddhist texts, probably a term of praise, and even popular for a time in China, as noted above “Shina” never caught on as a general designation for China among the ordinary Chinese population. Huang Zunxian 黄遵憲 (1848–1905) arrived in Japan in late 1877 to help open the first Chinese Legation there and soon became extremely interested in Japanese history and culture. In his *Riben zashi shi* 日本雜事詩 (Poems about various things in Japan), which caused a sensation in Japan, he offered an explanation for the Japanese reading of the Chinese characters for “Shina,” arguing that this pronunciation came to Japanese from renderings for “China” in European languages. This assertion would seem to imply that Huang had never heard the expression before coming to Japan.

In modern China, the use of Shina — or Zhina — dates primarily to the years just after the Sino-Japanese War when large numbers of Chinese came to Japan as students. In the many books about the West and China that they translated from Japanese into Chinese, “Shina” was often rendered “Zhongguo” and sometimes left as “Zhina,” as in one volume translated by Liang Qichao.

What about the Chinese opposition to the use of Shina? Anti-Japanese feelings were on the rise among Chinese as a result of events in the 1910s and 1920s. Some claimed that, while “Shina” may have shared its roots with English “China” and French “Chine,” in the mouths of Japanese there was something else that was missing from European enunciations. In his piece (mentioned above) of September 1936, Guo Moruo (who knew Japanese well) admitted that the expression Shina was not evil in and of itself, nor did it have pernicious origins. But, when used by Japanese, it was comparable, indeed worse, than the derogatory way in which Europeans often spoke the word “Jew” (or “Juif” or “Jude”). In a less convincing argument, he added that in all Japanese binational designations, the element for China came last. Yu Dafu 郁达夫 (1896–1945), who spent a number of allegedly unhappy years in Japan, expressed similar sentiments in several of his novels.²⁴

²⁴ Satō Saburō, “Nihonjin ga Chūgoku-o Shina to yonda koto ni tsuite no kōsatsu,” in his *Kindai Nit-Chū kōshō shi no kenkyū*, pp. 46–55.

Several other Chinese arguments against the use of *Shina*, noted by Satō and others, are even more far-fetched. Wang Gongbi 王拱璧 (1886–1976) claimed that “*Shina*” was homophonous with Japanese expressions implying “imminent demise” 將死 (I think there is something wrong here linguistically) and “thing” or “item” (*shina* 品). Others claimed that the first syllable of *Shina* (支那) implied the Japanese expression *shihai* 支配 or ‘control,’ while the second syllable implied (this time, only in Chinese) a grammatical third person; hence, the term belittled the Chinese people in the sense of “control them.” Some even suggested that the *shi* element in *Shina* implied the idea of “branch store” (*shiten* 支店) with Japan as the “main store” (*honten* 本店). These arguments are, frankly, specious to the point of incredulity.

In early June 1930 the *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* 東京日日新聞 editorialized against the use of the Chinese expression for the Republic of China, *Zhonghua minguo*, because both of the elements of the first term, *Zhong* and *Hua*, contained outdated conceptions of the Chinese as civilized and the others as, implicitly, barbarous. With “*Shina*,” all people stood on an equal footing, the newspaper argued, and there was no room for self-flattery. To the alleged Chinese claim that *Zhonghua minguo* was a Chinese translation of the English expression “National Republic of China,” the Japanese newspaper retorted that “*Shina*” was just as much “China.” The next day, June 8, the newspaper ran a rebuttal by the pseudonymous “Jittō” 實東 (later demonstrated to be the work of Sanetō Keishū who used the first character as his pen name) which put the problem simply: If the Chinese want to be called *Zhonghua* or *Zhongguo*, then that is their business. It is no different from a personal name, chosen by the person who bears it. (There is a problem here, for how many of us actually chose our own personal names? They are given to us at birth by others, usually parents or other relatives, and for reasons reflecting many different ethnic and religious traditions.) The term “*Nihon*” 日本 also, he argued, carried self-aggrandizing connotations when viewed from abroad (he had to have meant only the *Kanji* countries). Agreed, *Shina* has no intrinsically negative sense, but it is simply not the name the Chinese have chosen for themselves. (They didn’t choose “China” either, but never complained about it.) Sanetō, thus, knew full well the long and distinguished pedigree of the term

Shina/Zhina, but he was also suggesting that words acquire nuances with the passage of time, and this one no longer sounded good to Chinese ears.²⁵

Sanetō summarized the arguments against adopting “Chūgoku” in four points: (1) It (“center of the world”) is an arrogant name; (2) there is no historically more popular toponym in Japan than Shina; (3) as a cognate of “China,” it is an international name; and (4) Japan itself has a place name Chūgoku (in the Hiroshima area) that confuses things. Sanetō then rebutted each of these points. First, names of countries are all more or less arrogant, and contemporary China is not an overly confident state. As for the third point, China (the world’s largest country) did not use a form of Shina for itself, and the Soviet Union used Kitai (Китай), meaning that “Shina” and cognates are hardly international, if the two most populous countries in the world did not use them. Concerning the region of Japan known as Chūgoku, Sanetō suggested changing the area’s name to what would translate as “the Western region of Honshū” (Honshū saibu chihō 本州西部地区). Most ink, though, was spilled over the second point, the roots of “Shina” in the Buddhist canon going back to India and the like. Sanetō claimed that this may be true, but “Shina” in Japan had no such origins; it had only entered Japanese with the tale recounted above concerning Arai Hakuseki and his subsequent use of the term in *Sairan igen* of 1713.²⁶

In October of 1930, the Japanese government decided to change its position and adopt “Zhonghua minguo” (J. Chūka minkoku) as its official designation for the Republic of China. “Shina” remained far and away the popular favorite, and the war that began soon thereafter was soon to be dubbed Shina jihen 支那事變 or the “China Incident.” During the allied occupation of

²⁵ *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun*, June 5, 1930, and June 8, 1930; and Satō Saburō, “Nihonjin ga Chūgoku-o Shina to yonda koto ni tsuite no kōsatsu,” in his *Kindai Nit-Chū kōshō shi no kenkyū*, pp. 55–57. See also the excellent article by Kawashima Shin 川島真, “‘Shina’ ‘Shinakoku’ ‘Shina kyōwakoku’: Nihon Gaimushō no tai-Chū kōshō seisaku” 「支那」「支那国」「支那共和国」: 日本外務省の対中呼称政策 (“Shina,” “Shinakoku,” Shina kyōwakoku”: The policy of the Japanese Foreign Office in names for China), *Chūgoku kenkyū geppō* 中国研究月報 49.9 (September 1995), p. 4. Kawashima’s essay concentrates largely on the toponyms in its title as a problem in Sino-Japanese diplomatic encounters.

²⁶ Saitō Mareshi, “‘Shina’ sairon,” in *Kyōsei kara tekитай e, daiyonkai Nit-Chū kankei shi kokusai shinpojiumu ronbunshū*, pp. 214–216.

Japan in which China participated, the Chinese demanded an official end to Japanese use of the term *Shina*. The demand was accepted by the Japanese government on June 6, 1946.

In the postwar period, when scholars of Chinese history and culture in Japan were trying to atone for the sins of the prewar period and any complicity for which their profession may have been responsible in the war effort on the mainland, considerable scrutiny was focused on this issue of toponyms for China. It has become second nature now to refer to the expression *Shina* as a derisive prewar designation for China; that is, by not accepting the Chinese term *Zhongguo*, the Japanese are alleged to have committed an act of intellectual or cultural imperialism no different in their realm from the military actions of others in other realms.

I have no intention of becoming involved in the exculpating process, nor of offering advice to Japanese colleagues. However, the postwar mass *mea culpa* has tended toward a rejection of many of the finest achievements of prewar Sinology, often because of the political views of the authors or the connotations of their language. This is probably no different from saying a given German scholar of the 1930s was a fine historian, even if he was a virulent anti-Semite. Bernard Wasserstein's recent exposé of Hannah Arendt's use of sources is extraordinarily revealing in that connection.²⁷

First, as noted, Liu Shengguang was wrong; Japanese were not the only ones to use the expression "*Shina*." Such Chinese figures of diverse political persuasions as Liang Qichao, Zhang Binglin, Song Jiaoren 宋教仁 (1882–1913), Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866–1925), and Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865–1953) all had occasion to use its Chinese correlate, *Zhina*. All five men were among those intellectuals and political figures at the turn of the last century who were involved in China's effort to reassess its place in the world, a world in which China was no longer realistically the Central Kingdom and had no business so advertising itself. All spent time in Japan. While Liang became, for a while, an open Japanophile, Zhang's ethno-nationalism served to make him considerably less respectful of his Japanese hosts, while in Japan Zhang famously initiated the founding of the "*Zhina wangguo erbai sishi'er nian jinianhui*" 支那亡國二

²⁷ Bernard Wasserstein, "Blame the Victim — Hannah Arendt among the Nazis: The Historian and Her Sources," *Times Literary Supplement* 5558 (October 9, 2009), pp. 13–15.

百四十二年紀念會 (Commemorative society for the 242nd anniversary of the loss of China) from Tokyo shortly after his arrival there after being released from prison in China. Song launched the journal *Ershi shiji zhi Zhina* 二十世紀之支那 (Twentieth-century China) in Tokyo in 1904 as the revolutionary organ of students from Hunan and Hubei provinces; the *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* 東京朝日新聞 of July 30, 1905 carried a notice about it and mentioned that this new journal was extremely critical of Japan. Sun's association with the term involved one of his Japanese associates by the name of Umeya Shōkichi 梅屋庄吉 (1868–1934);²⁸ and Wu's intellectual peregrinations are too complex to trace here. Nonetheless, all adopted the use of the Japanese expression for China, a term whose ultimate etymon is, as noted, a Sanskrit rendering from Buddhist texts. For all the well-known scholarly and political differences among Liang, Sun, Zhang, Song, Wu, and Shi Cuntong, all of them opted for the more neutral *Zhina*, albeit not permanently.

Second, there is a certain naturally temporal quality to the designations used in naming. Of course, the power to establish a name that sticks presupposes some sort of authority of enforcement, but many other factors come into play before a name takes hold, not the least of which is comparable names for other states and ethnicities (the two thorniest and most easily offended groupings). Many terms have been offered as names for countries and ethnic groups that have simply not withstood the pressures of time and circumstance and have, accordingly, changed. Before the mid-1960s, virtually every well-meaning American, black or white and regardless of political affinity, referred to blacks as "Negroes" with no intention of offense or slight. It was simply the respectful name in use; and it was superior to the openly reviled and offensive term "colored," still in legal use by Southern bigots (to say nothing of the highly offensive term in colloquial use by this group). Use of "Negro" thus carried with it the self-proclamation of liberal or progressive or simply evolved. By the late 1960s, few if any liberals were still using "Negro" but had shifted to "black," because that was declared the ethnonym of choice by the group so named. Did that mean that people who had used the term "Negro" prior to the late 1960s were all racists, as it was clearly indicated it did for those who continued to use it

²⁸ See the excellent if excessive treatment at <http://baike.soso.com/v795437.htm>.

after the late 1960s? No one to my knowledge began the silly process of relexifying “Negro” (as *Shina* was forced to endure) and hence to discover hidden bias within. The newer ethnonyms, “Afro-American” or “African-American” (the latter sometimes without a hyphen), have been put forth in more recent times as candidates to replace “black,” but while gaining considerable ground have not as yet completely replaced “black.” We may witness yet another name shift in the not-too-distant future, and “black” may fall out of currency in certain quarters.²⁹

Of course, in the prewar period most Chinese used *Zhongguo* (not *Zhina*) as a designation for their country, while most Japanese used *Shina*. However, the use of *Shina*, I would argue, was not a conscious choice on the part of those Japanese, nor was it a way of taking a peculiarly anti-Chinese stance. In the postwar period, Japanese have all moved to adopt *Chūgoku* in imitation of the Chinese. The logical extension of the argument that *Shina* is offensive would be for Japanese to go one step further and use the Chinese term *Zhongguo* (pronounced in Chinese or in something akin to Chinese). That would be inconceivable, as Takeuchi Yoshimi sarcastically suggested. By the same token, continuing in the face of this shift to use *Shina* would be a retrograde act — and in the few instances in which it crops up, it has been soundly and roundly vilified.

There are instances in which the shift has not been so easy, as toponyms tend to be conservative by nature. The two most readily available examples are the place names in Japanese for the East China Sea (*Higashi Shinakai* 東シナ海) and the South China Sea (*Minami Shinakai* 南シナ海). Replacing “*Shina*” with “*Chūgoku*” in such instances is easier said than done. Thus far, the usual tack has been to replace the characters for “*Shina*” with the two *katakana* syllabaries — which is incidentally the first choice on the Microsoft Word Japanese program for these two place names. Similarly, “*Indochina*” (a term which has dropped out of contemporary usage even in English but which retains historical significance) is now rendered in Japanese as

²⁹ Since I first put forth this argument more than twenty years ago, I am happy to say that it has become a standard part of numerous websites in Chinese, Japanese, and English, usually without attribution; perhaps plagiarism is the highest form of flattery. See my “On Japanese Expressions for ‘China,’” *Sino-Japanese Studies* II.1 (December 1989), pp. 5–16, reprinted in *The Journal of Intercultural Studies* (Kansai University of Foreign Studies) 17–18 (1990–1991), pp. 31–40.

インドシナ, though it used to be written with the characters 印度支那 and pronounced exactly the same way. During the American-led war in Viet Nam in the 1960s, mainland Chinese newspapers regularly employed this term (pronounced “Yindu-Zhina” in Chinese) in their reportage. The same procedure, rendering the two characters as two *katakana* syllabaries, is frequently used when referring to many prewar proper nouns.³⁰

Surveying the present scene indicates much less sensitivity on the part of Chinese to the term *Shina* and growing ignorance of it in Japan — I am eliding the infamous case of the notorious troublemaker Ishihara Shintarō 石原慎太郎 (b. 1932), present governor of Tokyo prefecture and hardcore rightwing politician, who went out of his way to use the expression “Shinajin” at a public venue. If the case with which I began this essay is any indication, even when China and the Chinese find the term offensive, they are nonetheless beginning to historicize the term. I would argue that this reflects a growing sense of Chinese self-confidence in the world, specifically vis-à-vis Japan and the United States. As China grows richer, capable of manipulating international financial dealings, United Nations declarations, and even military power plays — and especially as Japan remains mired in economic stagnation — debates over the perniciousness of “*Shina*” have receded into the realm of near irrelevance. Witness similarly the way in which a much more confident Taiwan with little or no fanfare accepted *pinyin* after decades of holding on for dear life to the Wade-Giles Romanization scheme — if only because the PRC had devised the “Communist” *pinyin* system.³¹

³⁰ There are some other oddities that this dramatic shift in nomenclature has left behind: “*Shina* soba” 支那そば (aka ramen) is now rarely used, and if it is, it is all written out in *katakana*; and “*Shinachiku*” 支那竹 (lit., Chinese bamboo; a topping for ramen composed of dried bamboo shoots) has more recently been replaced with *menma* メンマ. The Sino-Tibetan language group is still, though, known as “*Shina-Chibetto gozoku*” シナ・チベット語族 and, last time I checked, no one was losing any sleep over it. See also Lin Siyun 林思雲, “‘Zhina’ wenti zonghengtan” 「支那」問題縱橫談 (Thorough discussion of the “*Shina*” question) at www.epochtimes.com/b5/4/10/20/n695630.htm.

³¹ For helping me to end on a note of humor about the punning ways in which “*Shina*/*Zhina*” is joked about in China today, I thank Victor Mair for sending this URL: <http://languagelog ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=4026>.

Since June 2006, all new issues of *Sino-Platonic Papers* have been published electronically on the Web and are accessible to readers at no charge. Back issues are also being released periodically in e-editions, also free. For a complete catalog of *Sino-Platonic Papers*, with links to free issues, visit the *SPP* Web site.

www.sino-platonic.org