



Debating the Anglosphere: History, Hegemony, Identity

- Other Spheres in History: the Sinosphere -

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**University of
Zurich** ^{UZH}

Historisches Seminar

What was the Sinosphere?



Shikanoshima (1784)

Modern East Asia



‘In the second year of the Jianwu Zhongyuan era [57 C.E.], the Wa country Nu sent an envoy with tribute who called himself *Dafu*. This country is located in the southern extremity of the Wa country. Emperor Guangwu bestowed upon him a seal. ...’

Source: *Sources of Japanese Tradition Volume 1*, compiled by Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur Tiedemann, p. 8. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Seal from Han Dynasty (= 206 BCE to 220 CE)

Source: <http://www.nishinon-kojintaxi.or.jp/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/shikanoshima-1.jpg>



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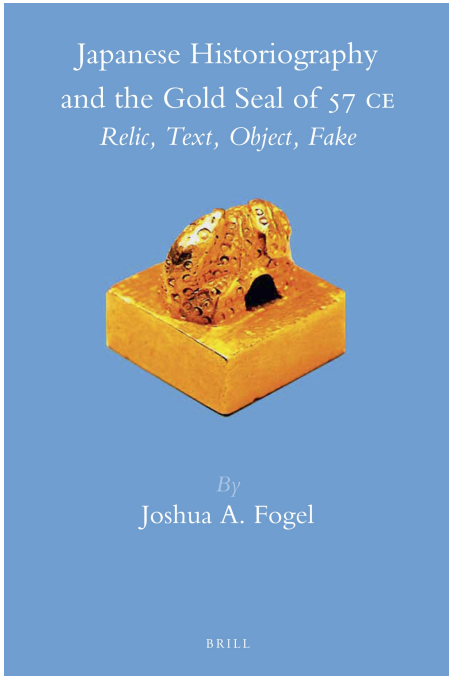
Seal from Han Dynasty (= 206 BCE to 220 CE)

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- ① 漢 : Kan (= Han China)
 - ② 委 = 倭 : Wa (= "Japan")
 - ③ 奴 : Na (= Local place name near today's Fukuoka)
 - ④ 國 : Koku (= State/country)
 - ⑤ 王 : Ō (= King)
- } "King of the state/country"

漢委奴國王：King of the State of Na, in the land of Wa, of the Han.





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Chinese characters = kanji (漢字)

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→ 'Japan' located within the bigger Sinosphere





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→ ‘Kings’ = inferior to ‘emperors’ (ie ‘child of heaven’)

‘In the third year of Daye [607 C.E.], King Tarishihoko [= Empress Suiko] sent an envoy to the court with tribute. ... [The envoy brought] an official message which read: “The Child of Heaven in the land where the sun rises addresses a letter to the Child of Heaven in the land where the sun sets. We hope you are in good health.” When the Emperor saw this letter, he was displeased and told the official in charge of foreign affairs that this letter from the barbarians was discourteous, and that such a letter should not again be brought to his attention.’

Source: *Sources of Japanese Tradition Volume 1*, compiled by Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur Tiedemann, p. 11. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.



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Historical significance of Sinosphere for Japan (selected):

- Written language
 - Political theory
 - Religion
 - Spatial imagination
- Sinosphere as intellectual 'grid'



**Buddhist temple next to the Tomb of
King Tongmyŏng (Korea) c. 5th Century.**

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_King_Tongmyong#/media/File:Tomb_of_King_Tongmyong,_Pyongyang,_North_Korea-1.jpg

Shitennō-ji (Japan, Osaka) 593 A.D.

Source: <https://kaseito.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/temple1.jpg>

(Religion)





↑ (North)



(Space) Edo, c.1644-45

http://jpimg.digital.archives.go.jp/kouseisai/category/ezu/sho_ho_edozu_e.html

Sumida River

Kanda River

Nihonbashi River

Edo Bay

Tōkaidō (connects Edo-Osaka)



(Black Warrior-north-mountains)



(Real North)

(White Tiger-west-road)

Tōkaidō Road



Kanda River

Nihonbashi River
Sumida River

Edo Bay

(Red Bird-south-body of water)

(Green Dragon-east-river)



Sinosphere as intellectual 'grid'

'Republic'

kyōwa (共和)

dōkō (同好)+ *gōitsu* (合一)

kaidoku, 会読

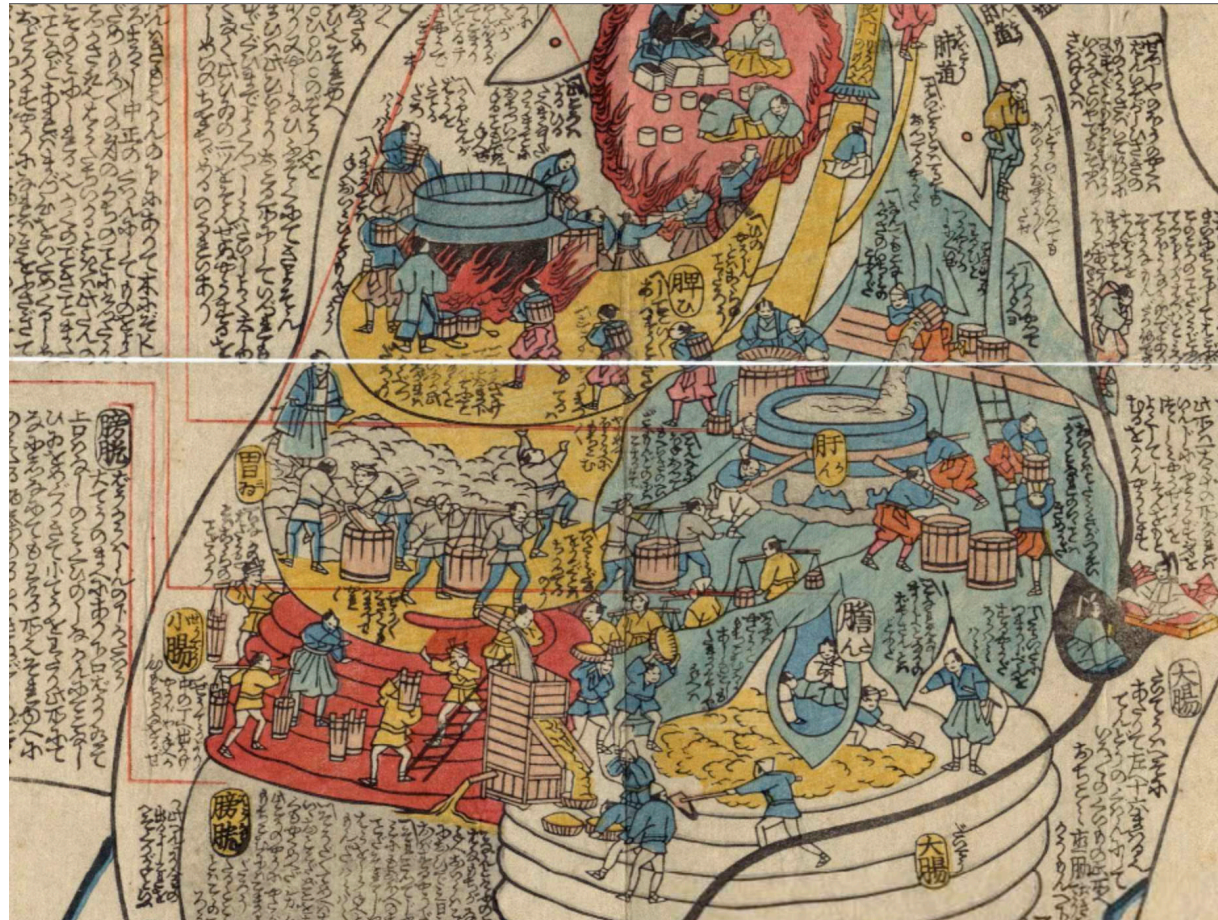
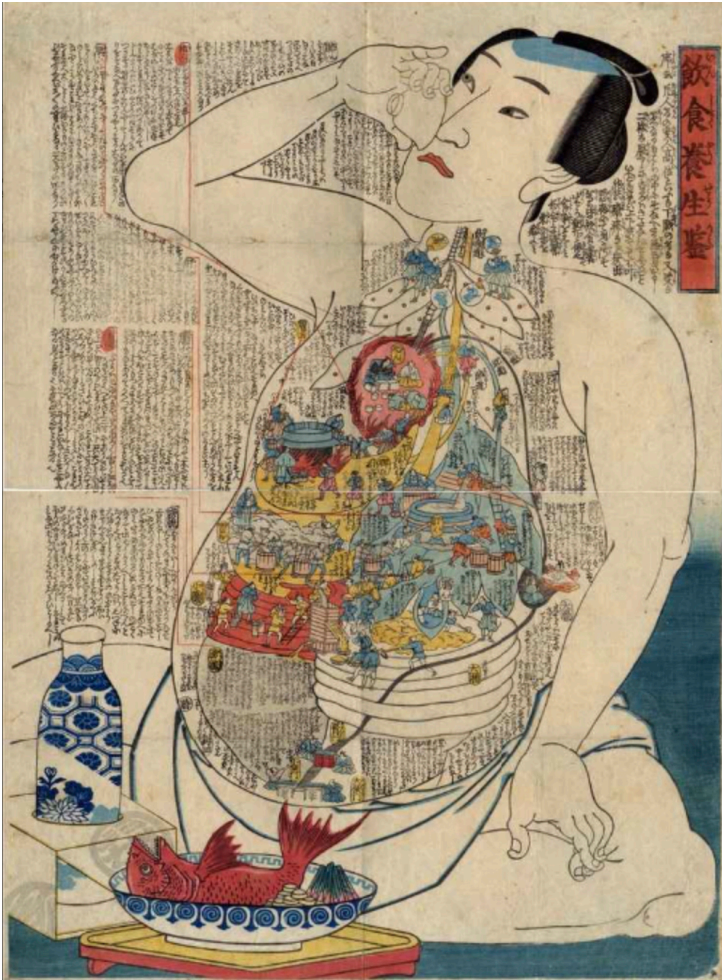


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Leaving the Sinosphere

1. Departure from Chinese intellectual models

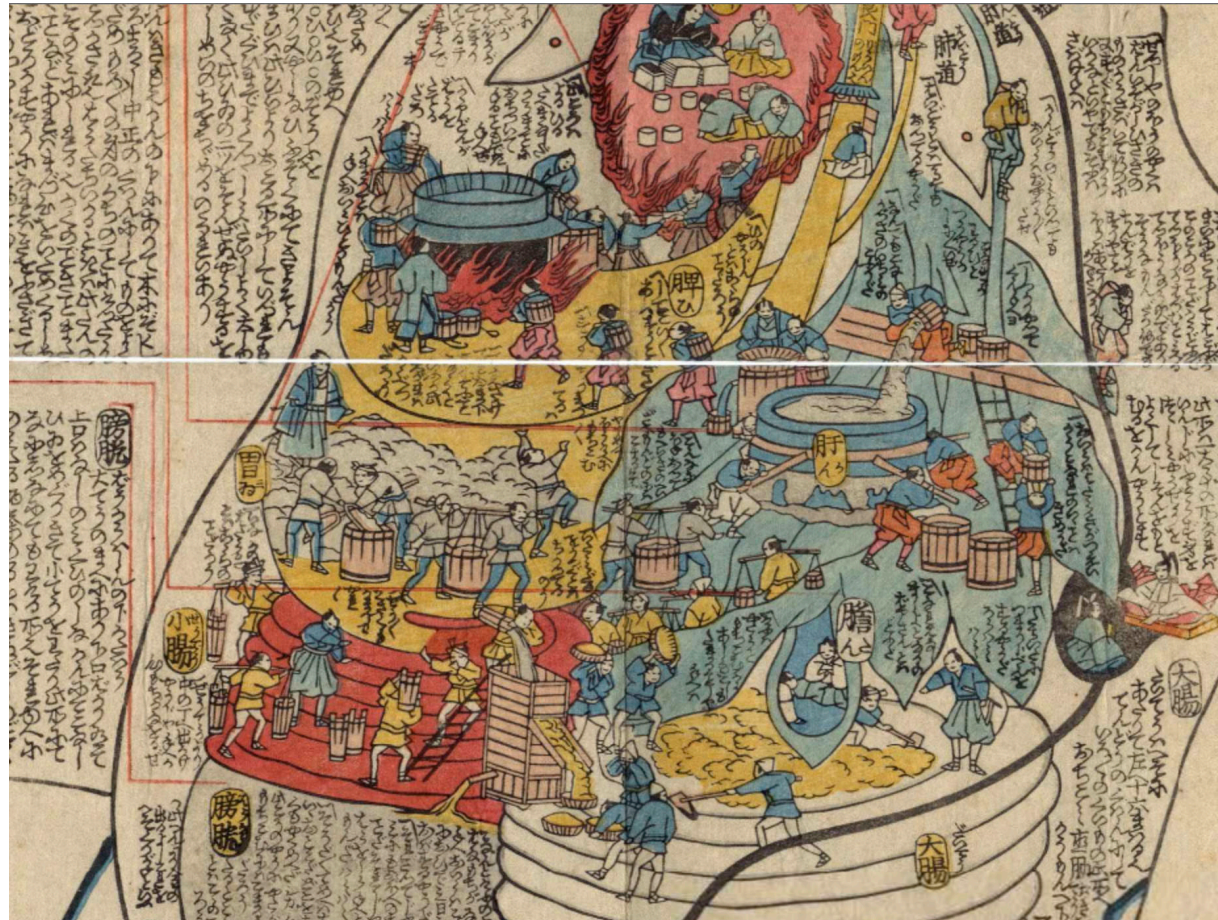


Dietary Life Rules (Inshoku yōjō kagami - 飲食養生鑑)

Source: Lyon Collection of Japanese wood-block prints

http://woodblockprints.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/418#

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2. Shock of the First Opium War (1839-1842)



3. Arrival of Perry's 'black ships' (1853-54)

→ *bunmei* (文明) as 'western' civilization
(Fukuzawa Yukichi)



Source: http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/black_ships_and_samurai/index.html





→ radicalism of the break with the Sinosphere

‘Japan is located in the eastern extremities of Asia, but the spirit of her people have already moved away from the old conventions of Asia to the Western civilization. Unfortunately for Japan, there are two neighboring countries. One is called China and another Korea. These two peoples, like the Japanese people, have been nurtured by Asiatic political thoughts and mores. ... Yet they remain arrogant and show no sign of self-examination.

...

What must we do today? We do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West. ...’



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The Sinosphere and 19C-20C global history



Significance for today?

- North Korea crisis: this is still the Sinosphere at work
- When you leave a sphere or a sphere collapses, things can be bloody
- In the wider scheme of things, the Anglosphere (if we accept it) will be a very short interlude in world history