

The perception and embodiment of the Ansai school on academic learning in the first half of the 18th century during the Edo period

– On the basis of analysis of the academic activities of Naokata Sato and his students –

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This report is a discussion of the process of the reception of Confucianism in the first half of the 18th century. Knowledge of Confucianism was limited to some members of the privileged class, such as Buddhist monks and nobles, and was widely disseminated after the Sengoku period. In addition, the growing popularity of the printed word contributed to the spread of knowledge. Such a situation facilitated many people's approaches to traditional and systematic knowledge. More people became aware of Confucianism, and learners' groups were expanded into a community of thought. The process is clarified by the analysis of the academic relationship between Confucius and his students.

I focused on the relationship between Naokata Sato of the Ansai school, and his students, clarifying the connections by analyzing the letters in which he corresponded with them. In Section 1, I introduce Sato and his students, and explain the background against which the correspondence took place.

In Section 2, I consider the situation of learning and the problem of the social class of the letter-writers. The methods used by Sato for teaching were different according to the class the letter-writers belonged to. They all shared the ultimate goal of learning. That is, to perceive the importance of "the Way", as, for example, in the sentence, "If, in the morning, I should hear about the Way, in the evening, I would die contented?".

Finally, in Section 3, the relations between Sato's students formed a basis for the reception of Confucianism. I considered the case of the Ise domain Nagashima feudal clan.

I clarify that Sato and his students tried to interest members of the clan in the system of the education of Confucianism. This is the role that this school played in the first half of the 18th century.