Acceptance of Confucian Ritual and Schools in the Ryukyu Kingdom

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Confucian worship began in the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1610, where it is said to have originated through a man called Saiken (Kiyuna Oyakata) from Kume-mura or Kuninda (present-day Kume-cho in Naha City, where the "36 Families" from Fukien lived), who stopped at a Confucian shrine in Qufu in Shandong Province when he was on his way to pay tribute to the Chinese Emperor. When he saw the shrine, a sense of respect and reverence welled up within him, so he drew pictures of Confucius and his four disciples and brought them back to be circulated and worshipped. A Confucian shrine was established there in 1679. It was an independent Confucian shrine that did not have any associated school facilities. The school (called Meirin-do) for young people was established in Kuninda 1718.

The history of schools in China goes back to ancient times. Beginning in the Tang Dynasty, Confucian shrines were built and attached to schools operated by local governments for the purpose of promoting Confucianism, and Confucian festivals known as Sekiten were held twice a year in mid-spring and mid-autumn (February and August) on the first Hinoto day, to commemorate Confucius, the origin of profound teaching and first master. This system spread widely throughout the country. However, at the time the Confucian shrines were established, there was nothing equivalent to the Chinese local government-run schools in the Ryukyu Kingdom, and under these circumstances it was inevitable that the Confucian shrines preceded the schools. Thus, when the head sappoushi envoy Wang Chi and his assistant Lin Lin Chang (林麟塚), who were dispatched to King Shotei, came to the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1683, they said, "Shrines to our teacher Confucius spread throughout the world only because all the local governments built schools. Therefore, without schools, there can be no shrines." Since local government officials (mayors and governors) were in charge of festivals and those connected with education (professors and assistants) were primarily involved in conducting the festivals, they suggested that a school be established based on the Chinese system. Consequently, an application was made in 1717 and construction was completed the following year, in 1718. The school was named Meirin-do, and thus a school with a Confucian shrine was established.

Prompted by this, in around 1749, a separate proposal that would establish an educational institution for
young people in Shuri, Naha, and Tomari for the purpose of training bureaucrats in the Shuri Dynasty's capital was considered. The proposal only went through in 1798, and after that, a national high school, a prefectural middle school, and a village elementary school were established.

Lin Lin Chang was from Fujian Province, and after he finished his assignment, he was transferred to become the senji of the teigaku of Guizhou Province. Lin Lin Chang was apparently very enthusiastic about education, and some years later, he was sent a letter by Tei Junsoku, praising him for promoting education to such an extent and building the school in the Ryukyu Kingdom.