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Abstract: Due to the different historical developments and political traditions of China and Japan, Chinese concepts of legitimacy could not be applied to Japan without major modifications. Tokugawa historians demonstrated a high level of flexibility and creativity in their discussion of political legitimacy. Some Chinese concepts were reinterpreted to fit into the Tokugawa system. For instance, the mandate of heaven was used primarily to discuss the right to govern and denied a Chinese-style "revolution" and dynastic change. Using major Tokugawa historical writings as the main references and highlighting the legitimacy of the Southern or Northern Courts as well as the legitimacy of the Edo bakufu, this study examines the making of Japanized concepts of legitimacy in Tokugawa historiography. It sheds light on understanding how Tokugawa historians creatively modified and appropriated Chinese historical ideas and terms to accommodate Japanese tradition and the Tokugawa political system.

Redefining Legitimacy in Tokugawa Historiography

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Introduction

Both the Chinese and the Japanese have a tradition of compiling and using history. Chinese historical writings, in particular, Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019-1086) *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government, 1084) and Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑑綱目 (Summary of the *Comprehensive Mirror*, 1172), were also influential in shaping historical critique and terminology in Japanese historiography. Legitimizing the current regime was a hidden political agenda in many historical writings in China and Japan in which the discussion of political "legitimacy" (正統 *zhengtong* in Chinese, *seitō* in Japanese) was passionately engaged. At a glance, the discourse on political legitimacy looks similar in Chinese and Japanese historical writings, as both laid emphasis on the blood lineage and morality in the fashion of *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals) and the Zhu Xi School. A virtuous ruler descending from the royal bloodline would be in a good position to contest legitimacy. A closer investigation reveals that Tokugawa historiography redefined and indigenized Chinese concepts of legitimacy to rationalize political realities in Tokugawa Japan, such as the *bakuhan* 幕藩 system (the Tokugawa political structure that defined the relationship between the shogunate and domains), the authority of the Edo bakufu, the co-existence of two central governments, and the political implications of Shinto.

The writing of history in Japan reached its peak in the Tokugawa period. The bakufu cultivated Ieyasu's cult through the compilation of official histories and the

establishment of the Tōshōgū Shrine 東照宮.[1] The first Edo shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu 德川家康 (1543-1616), was presented as a sage ruler and a deity. In the seventeenth century, Japanese historians were preoccupied with the idea of legitimizing the newly-founded regime.[2] The three representative Tokugawa historical writings—namely, *Honchō tsugan* 本朝通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror of Japan, 1670, written by Hayashi Razan 林羅山 [1583-1657] and his son, Gahō 鵞峰[1618-1680]), *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史 (History of Great Japan, 1657-1906, compiled by Tokugawa Mitsukuni 德川光圀 [1628-1700]), and *Tokushi yoron* 讀史餘論 (A Reading of History, 1712, written by Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 [1657-1725])—all agreed that Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288-1339) split the nation in two and thus lost legitimacy to rule, and that Tokugawa Ieyasu received the heaven's mandate (*tenmei* 天命) to rule by virtue of his high moral standard and military abilities. Using major Tokugawa historical writings as the main references and highlighting the legitimacy of the Southern-Northern Courts and the legitimacy of the Edo bakufu, this study examines the making of Japanized concepts of legitimacy in Tokugawa historiography. It sheds light on understanding how Tokugawa historians creatively modified and appropriated Chinese historical ideas and terms to accommodate Japanese tradition and the Tokugawa political system.

The Limitation of Chinese Concepts of Legitimacy in Japanese History

Political legitimacy in Chinese historiography was a complicated concept intricately intertwined with morality, unification, the distinction between the Han and barbarians (華夷之辨 *huayi zhi bian*), blood lineage, transmission of the sagely way (道

[1] Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 50-62.
[2] Victor Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 45.

統 *daotung*), five circulatory phases (五運 *wuyun*), and heaven's mandate.[3] Unlike their Chinese counterparts, Japanese historical writings used neither the distinction between the Han and barbarians, the five circulatory phases, nor the transmission of the sagely way. In order to legitimize the Tokugawa system, Japanese historians created their own theories of legitimacy (such as the imperial regalia theory) and modified Chinese concepts (such as heaven's mandate).

The distinction between the Han and barbarians was applied to discuss the legitimacy of regimes founded by non-Han peoples. When there was a coexistence of Han regime and non-Han regime in China, the former had a better chance to be regarded as legitimate. Non-Han regimes, unless they could unify the nation, such as the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and the Manchu Qing Dynasty, were seldom considered legitimate.[4] This doctrine was not applicable to pre-modern Japan that had never been conquered by foreign nations. The Koreans, Chinese, Ryukyuan, and Ainu were largely assimilated into the Yamato race-dominated Japan. The sense of racial superiority did exist in Tokugawa historical writings. For instance, *Dai Nihon shi* put China, Korea, Ezo 蝦夷, the Bohai Kingdom 渤海國, and Southeast Asia under the category of "Shohan retsuden" 諸藩列傳 (J. Zhufan liezhuan, "Biographies of Foreign Nations"). It was only a nationalist expression and was not used to discuss legitimacy in Japanese history.

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[3] Rao Zongyi (Jao Tsung-I) 饒宗頤, *Zhongguo shixue shang zhi zhengtonglun* 中國史學上之正統論 (Legitimacy in Chinese Historiography) (Hong Kong: Longmen shudian, 1977).

[4] Unification and legitimacy are closely tied. See Yuri Pines, "Name or Substance Between *Zhengtong* and *Yitong*," *History: Theory and Criticism* 2 (May 2001): 105-38. The internal conflict between unification and legitimacy can be seen from Zhu Xi's disagreement with Sima Guang over the Three Kingdoms. While Sima Guang regarded Wei as the legitimate regime because it was responsible for finally unifying the nation, Zhu Xi claimed legitimacy for Shu because of its proper bloodline and righteous motives. See Naitō Konan 內藤湖南, "Cong Songdai shixue kan Zhongguo zhengtong lun" 從宋代史學看中國正統論 (Legitimacy in China as seen from Song Historiography), trans. Ng Wai-ming 吳偉明, *History: Theory and Criticism* 2 (May 2001): 161-67.

The theory of five circulatory phases had been influential in the discussion of political legitimacy in China from the Qin-Han era through the Tang-Song, using the doctrines of *wude zhongshi* 五德終始 (the rotation of the five virtues) and *wuxing xiangsheng xiangke* 五行相生相剋 (mutual creation and destruction of the five agents) to argue that dynastic change was historically inevitable.[5] Introduced to Japan in ancient times, this theory was mainly applied to astronomy, geography, medicine, military and divination. In politics, it only exerted influence on matters of secondary importance such as revising the calendar in the sixty-year cycle (甲子 *jiazi*) and was not applied to political legitimacy.[6] Although many Tokugawa historical writings contained the idea of historical trends or inevitability, they did not adopt the theory of five circulatory phases.

The transmission of the sagely way was an important idea in Neo-Confucianism. According to this theory, when China was not unified, the regime that transmitted Confucian orthodoxy was legitimate. Hence, many scholars of the Zhu Xi School claimed legitimacy for Shu and Southern Song on the basis of morality. Some Tokugawa Confucian scholars suggested that the transmission of the sagely way shifted from China to Japan.[7] Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622-1685), in his *Chūchō jijitsu* 中朝事實 (The True Facts Concerning the Central Kingdom, 1669), referred to China as "*Shina* 支那", "*gaichō*" 外朝 (foreign nation), and "*ichō*" 異朝 (alien nation). He maintained that China lost the transmission of the sagely way to Japan due to dynastic change and foreign invasion, and thus only Japan, the land of absolute loyalty, was entitled to use "*chūchō*"

[5] Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, *Wude zhongshi shuo xia de zhengzhi he lishi* 五德終始說下的政治和歷史 (Politics and History under the Doctrine of the Rotation of the Five Virtues) (Hong Kong: Longmen shudian, 1970).
[6] Wai-ming Ng, *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), Chapter 4.
[7] Kate Nakai, "The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40:1 (June 1980): 157-99.

中朝 (central kingdom), "*chūshū*" 中州 (central continent) and "*chūka*" 中華 (central land). Mito scholars Tokugawa Mitsukuni and Aizawa Seishisai 會澤正志齋 (1781-1863) aired similar views. Sokō, Mitsukuni, and Seishisai discussed the transmission of the sagely way from a cross-cultural perspective; none applied it to political legitimacy in Japanese history.

Blood lineage was a useful means to claim legitimacy in China. Insurrectionists and new emperors liked to claim to carry noble blood and to emphasis their Han identity (in case the overthrown regime was non-Han). In Japan, blood lineage was applied to legitimize the authority to govern, and not sovereignty itself. De facto rulers of Japan, including courtiers, imperial relatives, and warriors, gained prestige and authority from their alleged noble origins. Like their Chinese counterparts, for the sake of political justification, the Japanese forged a large number of family histories and historical sources. The early Tokugawa was the heyday of forgery when the bakufu and domains strove to establish their legitimacy through problematic genealogies.[8] Matsudaira 松平 (later renamed Tokugawa), a military clan of Mikawa Province 三河國 from the Kantō 關東 region, claimed descent from the Seiwa Genji 清和源氏, one of the most powerful branches in the Minamoto clan. Seiwa Genji was the most prestige family among the warriors. The founder of the three military regimes—namely, Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147-1199), Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305-1358), and Tokugawa Ieyasu—all claimed descent from this lineage. There was a saying, "non-Seiwa Genji cannot be appointed Shogun." There were exceptions in Japanese history, but the influence of Seiwa Genji in the medieval and early modern periods was undoubtedly strong. Tokugawa Ieyasu already called himself "Minamoto Ason" 源朝臣 prior to the

[8] Wai-ming Ng, "The Forgery of Books in Tokugawa Japan," *East Asian Library Journal* 9.2 (2000): 19-45.

founding of the Edo bakufu. Throughout the Tokugawa period, disputable blood ties between the Tokugawa and the Seiwa Genji became widely accepted. For instance, Rai Sanyō 賴山陽 (1781-1832), in his *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史 (An Unofficial Japanese History, 1829), introduced the origins of the Tokugawa house as follows: "My Tokugawa clan was descended from Nitta Yoshishige 新田義重. Yoshishige was the eight-generation descendant of Emperor Seiwa 清和天皇. Tsunemoto 經基, the grandson of Emperor Seiwa, was granted the surname Minamoto and downgraded to a military house."[9]

The Rise of Japanese Interpretation of Heaven's Mandate

Heaven's mandate was a key concept in Chinese historical writings. Based on Confucian classics such as *Mengzi* 孟子 (Book of Mencius) and *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), this concept constituted a political philosophy that fused morality, heaven's will, and revolution. In the Chinese political tradition, the throne held sovereignty and carried out governance. When the incumbent emperor was morally handicapped, his heaven's mandate would be taken away and given to another person to found a new dynasty by means of revolution. The doctrine of heaven's mandate was a powerful ideology to justify dynastic change and legitimize new regime.

Japanese historical writings used the concept of heaven's mandate in a different manner. In Japanese history, the separation of sovereignty and governance was the norm. The imperial family reigned in unbroken succession but did not usually rule. Heaven's mandate, in Japanese historical writings, except for a few cases, referred to the right to

[9] Rai Sanyō, *Nihon gaishi*, ed. Tsukamoto Tetsuzō 塚本哲三, Vol. 2, Chapter 18 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1921), p. 555.

govern.[10] Tokugawa historians, perhaps with a few exceptions like Arai Hakuseki and Daizai Shundai 太宰春台 (1680-1747), discussed the political legitimacy of the Edo bakufu within the traditional political framework.[11]

The earlier form of the heaven's mandate theory in Japan was heaven's way (*tendō* 天道). Historical writings of the medieval and Warring States periods, such as *Taiheiki* 太平記 (Record of the Great Peace), *Genpei seisuiki* 源平盛衰記 (An Account of the Genpei Wars), *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (The Tale of Heike), and *Shinchō kōki* 信長公記 (Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga), contained the idea of heaven's way, showing that warrior families used heaven's way to justify their ever increasing powers. According to the heaven's way doctrine, heaven's way was higher than secular powers including the imperial house. Warrior leaders claimed that their powers came from heaven and not the imperial house. Hence, the heaven's way doctrine undermined the authority of the imperial house.[12] In the Warring States period, warrior leaders began to use both heaven's way and heaven's mandate in their writings, claiming that they received heaven's mandate to carry out heaven's way.

In the Tokugawa period, the theory of heaven's mandate was frequently used in historical writings to legitimize the bakufu as the de facto central government. Both official and unofficial histories agreed that Tokugawa Ieyasu received the heaven's mandate to govern the nation. *Honchō tsugan, Tokushi yoron* and *Dai Nihon shi* all pointed out that Emperor Go-Daigo lost the heaven's mandate to the warrior house due to

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[10] John Tucker, "Two Mencian Political Notions in Tokugawa Japan," *Philosophy East and West* 47.2 (April 1997): 233-53.

[11] Arai Hakusei regarded the Edo bakufu as a new dynasty that combined sovereignty and governance, a position close to the Chinese definition of "revolution." Daizai Shundai insisted that the Kamakura bakufu, Muromachi bakufu and Edo bakufu were all independent dynasties and that the shogun should carry the title of "King of Japan." Theirs were nevertheless an alternative view.

[12] Ozawa Eiichi 小澤榮一, *Kinsei shigaku shisō shi kenkyū* 近世史学思想史研究 (A Study of Ideas in Early Modern Japanese Historiography) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1974), pp. 15-17.

his ethical failures.[13] The three representative Tokugawa historical writings, based on Ieyasu's morality, ability, bloodline and achievement of unification, confirmed that he received the heaven's mandate. The Hayashi family compared the Battle of Sekigahara to "the righteous uprisings of King Tang of Shang and King Wu of Zhou." Arai Hakuseki, in his *Hankanpu* 藩翰譜 (The Genealogies of Daimyō, 1702), used "a change in heaven's mandate" (*tenmei ikkai* 天命一改) to refer to Ieyasu's victory at the Battle of Sekigahara. In *Tokushi yoron,* Hakuseki divided Japanese history into fourteen epochs, representing the frequent change in heaven's mandate. Ironically, the same theory of heaven's mandate made an opposite turn in the *bakumatsu* 幕末 period (late Tokugawa era, 1853-1867), used by loyalists (*shishi* 志士) to express anti-bakufu views. For instance, Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830-1859) believed that the bakufu lost heaven's mandate for failing to carry out the policy of "revere the emperor and repel the barbarians" (*sonnō jōi* 尊王攘夷).

The Southern and Northern Courts Controversy over Legitimacy

Japanese historiography reached its apex in the Tokugawa period when the bakufu, domains, and independent scholars were enthusiastic about history writing and critique. There were two major issues about legitimacy in Tokugawa historical writings: the Southern and Northern courts controversy and the legitimacy of the Edo bakufu, addressing sovereignty and governance respectively.

[13] Although *Dai Nihon shi* appreciated Emperor Do-Daigo's efforts in the Kenmu Restoration 建武中興 (1333-1336), it blamed him for making politics chaotic and for losing the mandate of heaven. It reads: "[Ashikaga] Takauji was full of disloyal acts, but they were caused by the collapse of imperial rule." See Asaka Tanpaku 安積澹泊, *Dai Nihon shi sansō* 大日本史贊藪 (Appraisal of the *Dai Nihon shi*), in Matsumoto Sannosuke 松井三之介 and Ogura Yoshihiko 小倉芳彦, annot., *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系 48: *Kinsei shi ronshū* 近世史論集 (Collection of Early Modern Historical Writings) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1974), p. 297.

The era of *nanbokuchō* 南北朝 (Southern and Northern Courts, 1336-1392) was the only period in Japanese history that had two rivaling dynasties; each had its own imperial house, central government, army, land, and people. It was not easy for the bakufu to handle this issue. From the perspective of the regime's unification and the current imperial bloodline, the Northern Court should have been legitimate. Judging from morality and the blood ties with the Tokugawa house, it was the Southern Court that should have been legitimate. The bakufu declared the Northern Court the legitimate regime, and official writings, ceremonies, and rituals basically followed this position. Nevertheless, a certain level of ambiguity remained. The bakufu never imposed this official stance on the Tokugawa intellectual world. Tokugawa historians, in particular those from outside the bakufu circle, were thus free to express their views. There was no consensus whatsoever among historians and scholars on this issue.

As an official history, *Honchō tsugan* had to follow the bakufu's position to claim legitimacy for the Northern Court out of respect for the current imperial house. In the Tokugawa period, the throne went to the bloodline of the Northern Court. Recognizing the Northern Court meant to maintain the status quo and avoid unnecessary controversy and a sovereignty crisis. The Hayashi family presented their arguments in two aspects: first, the reigning emperor came from the bloodline of the Northern Court, and thus the Northern Court was the direct line of decent. The Southern Court was only the collateral branch of the imperial family, and its bloodline had never been enthroned since 1458. Second, the Northern Court was geographical located in Kyoto, the imperial capital for more than a thousand years, whereas the Southern Court built the capital in Yoshino 吉野, a remote countryside in Nara.[14] This kind of geo-political legitimacy can also be

[14] Hayashi Gahō expressed this argument in *Nihon ōdai ichiran* 日本王代一覽 (Survey of the Sovereigns of Japan).

found in Chinese historiography. In discussing legitimacy, whether the dynasty was located in the Central Provinces of the North was sometime taken into consideration.[15]

History compilations by domains and independent scholars had more freedom and did not have to be in accord with the official position. Influenced by Neo-Confucian ethics, just as the *Tongjian gangmu* had supported the legitimacy of the state of Shu, *Dai Nihon shi* claimed legitimacy for the Southern Court on moral grounds. It saw the Northern Court as merely a puppet regime controlled by Ashikaga Takauji. More interestingly, *Dai Nihon shi* also argued its case on religious grounds, using the three imperial regalia (sword, jewel, and mirror) as evidence. The regalia holder was considered the legitimate ruler.

This idea was first suggested by the famed minister of the Southern Court, Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293-1354) in his *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 (Chronicles of the Authentic Lineages of the Divine Emperors, 1339).[16] Some early Tokugawa Confucians supported this view. For instance, Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1618-1682) used the regalia to legitimize the Southern Court in his *Yamato kagami* 倭鑑 (Mirror of Japan), blaming the Hayashi family for recognizing the Northern Court.[17] As a matter of fact, Hayashi Gahō, the chief complier of *Honchō tsugan*, accepted the theory of the regalia and regarded the Southern Court as the legitimate dynasty in his private capacity. However due to his official assignment, he could not express his

[15] Wang Wenxue 汪文學, *Zhengtong lun* 正統論 (On Legitimacy) (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2002), pp. 136-70. Although *Honchō tsugan* adopted the official position, it was very prudent and subtle in narrating this period. Hayashi Gahō revealed his principle as follows: "From the Ryakuō 曆應 to the Meitoku 明德 [reign periods], Japan had two courts. It was a great change in my country. We should not make judgments on legitimacy lightly, and thus I have only added subtle comments on individual chapters once in a while." Kokusho kankōkai 國書刊行會, ed., *Honchō tsugan* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1920), vol. 1, p. 8.

[16] Paul Varley, *Imperial Restoration in Medieval Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp.147-49.

[17] *Kinsei shigaku shisō shi kenkyū*, pp. 282-86.

personal views in *Honchō tsugan*. He explained: "If I claim legitimacy for the Southern Court, then the ancestors of the current emperor would become traitors. I am concerned about the feeling of the imperial family."[18] Even Arai Hakusei admitted the value of the regalia as symbols of legitimacy, although he did not believe that they had any magical power.

The regalia theory had a very strong impact on Mitogaku 水戸學 (the Mito School). Asaka Tanpaku 安積澹泊 (1656-1738), a chief historian of the *Dai Nihon shi* project and a discipline of the late Ming refugee scholar Zhu Shunshui 朱舜水 (1600-1682), explained: "The place that holds the regalia can use them to unite the people"; "the importance of the regalia rests on their ability to unite the people. If the people support them, the regalia are important. If the people do not support them, the regalia are unimportant. As heaven and man are united, the Way and the regalia are not two different things."[19] How could we ascertain that the regalia would not fall into the wrong hands? Tanpaku replied that the regalia had spiritual power and thus they would only go to the righteous side. Naturally, the regalia went to the Southern Court and were kept there until 1392. This idea might have been inspired by Hayashi Razan's *Jinmu tennō ron* 神武天皇論 (On Emperor Jinmu) in which he associated the three imperial regalia with the three Confucian virtues (wisdom, benevolence, and encourage).[20] Kuriyama Senpō 栗山潛峰 (1671-1706), another historian on the *Dai Nihon shi* project and a student of the Kimon school 崎門學 (founded by Yamazaki Ansai), in his *Hōken*

[18] *Kokushikan nichiroku* 國史館日錄 (The Diary of the National History Compilation Office), quoted in Kate Nakai, "The Tokugawa Confucian Historiography: The Hayashi, Early Mito school and Arai Hakuseki," in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 81.
[19] *Nihon shisō taikei* 48: *Kinsei shi ronshū*, p. 263.
[20] See Matsumoto Sannosuke, "Kinsei ni okeru rekishi jōjutsu to sono shisō" 近世における歴史敍述とその思想 (Historical Narrative and Thought in the Early Modern Period), in *Nihon shisō taikei* 48: *Kinsei shi ronshū*, p. 603.

taiki 保建大記 (Records of the Hōgen 保元 and Kenkyū 建久 Eras, 1689), expressed similar views as Tanpaku's. Senpō believed in the absolute authority of the regalia, and his historical narrative focused on the possession and transmission of the regalia.

Rai Sanyō supported the Southern Court in *Nihon gaishi* based on Neo-Confucian ethics. Between the Southern Court and the Northern Court, he stressed that who represented righteousness and won the heart of the people was legitimate. He asked if we accepted the Northern Court as the legitimate regime, then Nitta Yoshisada 新田義貞 (1301-1338) and Kusunoki Masahide 楠木正成 would become traitors. That went against his moral principle.

Independent historians did not reach a consensus regarding the legitimacy of the Southern Court or the Northern Court. Some (such as the Kyoto courtier-scholar Yanagi Toshimitsu 柳原紀光 [1746-1800]) regarded the Northern Court as legitimate; whereas others (such as Yamazaki Ansai and his disciples) preferred the Southern Court. There were people who considered both legitimate (such as *kokugaku* 國學 [nativist] scholar Shikamochi Masazumi 鹿持雅澄 [1791-1858]) or illegitimate (such as Arai Hakuseki). In general, the pro-Northern Court voice was stronger in the early Tokugawa, whereas the support for the Southern Court gained momentum in the late Tokugawa, culminating in the rise of loyalism and the fall of the bakufu. Until the *bakumatsu* period, the majority of Tokugawa historians, regardless of their stance on *nanbokuchō*, had no intention to challenge either the imperial house's right to reign or the bakufu's right to govern.

The Legitimacy of the Edo Bakufu

The legitimacy of the Edo bakufu was upheld by Tokugawa historical writings until the *bakumatsu* era when someone challenged the bakufu from historical and

rhetorical perspectives.[21] In the decades after the establishment of the Edo bakufu in 1603, there was a movement to glorify Tokugawa Ieyasu and his ancestors. *Mikawa motogatari* 三河物語 (Tale of Mikawa, 1622, by Ōkubo Tadataka 大久保忠教 [1560-1639]), *Mikawa ki* 參河記 (Record of Mikawa, 1622, by Hori Kyōan 堀杏庵 [1585-1643]) and *Tōshōgū gonenpu* 東照宮御年譜 (Annals of Tokugawa Ieyasu, 1631, by Tokugawa Yoshinao 德川義直 [1600-1650]) were products of this movement.

Honchō tsugan was bakufu's first official history project. Commissioned by the third shogun Tokugawa Iemistu 德川家光 (1604-1651) in 1644, Hayashi Razan complied the annals of Japanese history from Emperor Jinmu to Emperor Go-Yōzei 後陽成天皇 (1572-1617) in the fashion of Sima Guang's *Zizhi tongjian* and Zhu Xi's *Tongjian gangmu*. After Razan's demise in 1657, Hayashi Gahō succeeded to his father's project and finished it in 1670. Highlighting Ieyasu's role in unifying the nation, *Honchō tsugan* referred to Ieyasu as "the divine ruler" (*jinkun* 神君) or "the great divine ruler" (*dai-jinkun* 大神君). The Hayashi family was ambivalent about the nature of the legitimacy of the Edo bakufu. While recognizing the coexistence of the Kyoto court and the Edo bakufu, they implicitly suggested that the bakufu was the legitimate regime in terms of both sovereignty and governance.[22]

Tokushi yoron was a historical analysis of Japanese history from the past to the founding of the Edo bakufu. Its conceptualization of Japanese history as the history of the

[21] Wai-ming Ng, "Political Terminology in the Legitimation of Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Asian History* 34:2 (2000): 138-48.

[22] The Hayashi family was mild and implicit in its historical critique. While upholding the legitimacy of the Northern Court and the Edo bakufu, it respected the Southern Court and the imperial family in Kyoto. See John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), pp. 20-21.

warriors was a departure from the Japanese historiographical tradition.[23] Written as a history textbook to teach the sixth shogun, Tokugawa Ienobu 德川家宣 (1662-1712), Arai Hakuseki expressed his own philosophy of history and justification of the dominance of the military house. To Hakuseki, the rise of the military regime was inevitable, as the imperial house lost the mandate of heaven due to moral corruption. He praised the military government for bringing stability and order to the nation. In order to legitimize the Edo bakufu, Hakuseki put Ieyasu at the apex of Japanese history in his interpretation of the hexagram *qian* 乾卦 from the *Yijin*g. He summarized Japanese history as follows: "Regarding the historical trends in Japan, the government of the realm fell to the military house after nine epochal changes. The military government fell to the rule of the present house after five epochal changes."[24] According to the hexagram *qian*, nine in the fifth place was the position of the ruler. His philosophy of history aimed to demonstrate that the Edo shogunate was in the legitimate position of nine in the fifth place.[25] In *Hankanfu*, Hakuseki compared Ieyasu's victory at the Battle of Sekigahara to the revolution led by the King of Zhou to overthrow the Shang Dynasty. He also praised Ieyasu for implementing feudalism in Japan in the manner of the ancient Chinese sage-king. To Hakuseki, the Edo bakufu was the legitimate dynasty in place of the Kyoto court. In *Tokushi yoron*, he called the emperor in Kyoto, a "common lord" (*kyōshu* 共主), a term used to describe a monarch without real power. Hakuseki's historical views represented a departure from concepts of the separation of sovereignty and governance as well as the distinction between the kingly way and the hegemonic way.

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[23] John S. Brownlee, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), pp. 116-28.

[24] Arai Hakuseki, *Tokushi yoron*, in Matsumura Akira 村松明, Bitō Masahide 尾藤正英, and Katō Shūichi 加藤周一, annot., *Nihon shisō taikei* 35: *Arai Hakuseki* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1975), p. 184.

[25] See my *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture,* pp. 69, 225; "Introduction," on *Lessons from History: The Tokushi Yoron by Arai Hakuseki*, trans. Joyce Ackroyd (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), pp. xxxix-xi.

Dai Nihon shi was a general history of Japan compiled by scholars in Mito domain. Following the annals and biography style of *Shi ji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian, by Sima Qian 司馬遷) and the principle of "revere the Emperor, condemn the hegemon" (*sonnō senba* 尊王賤霸) expounded in *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), *Dai Nihon shi* focused on the history of the imperial court, imbued with loyalist ideas and moral judgments.[26] It is said that Tokugawa Mitsukuni was not pleased with the Hayashi family who refrained from making moral judgments on historical figures and regarded Wu Taibo 吳太伯, a prince of the Zhou dynasty, as the founder of the Japanese imperial house. He decided to compile a national history on his own in the style of *Chunqiu*. He wrote: "In order to clarify the legitimacy of the imperial house and the distinction between the ruler and the ruled, I compiled this history to make my personal statement."[27] Mitsukuni always reminded himself that "my lord is the emperor. The present shogun is the head of my family."[28]

Dai Nihon shi was harsh on military regimes and warrior leaders. Asaka Tanpaku looked down upon the Kamakura and Muromachi bakufu, calling them *hafu* 覇府 (hegemonic government) and *hagyō* 覇業 (hegemonic career). He criticized Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義滿 (1358-1408) severely for accepting the title of "king of Japan" (*Nihon kokuō* 日本國王) from the Ming emperor. He did not raise any criticism against the Edo bakufu and gave the Edo bakufu support through praising Nitta Yoshisada's

[26] Noguchi Takehiko 野口武彦, *Edo no rekishika* 江戸の歴史家 (Historians of the Tokugawa Period) (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1979), p.116.
[27] "Bairi sensei hi," 梅里先生碑 (Epigraph of Mr. Bairi), in Miyata Masahiko 宮田正彦, ed., *Mito Mitsukuni no Bairi sensei hi* 水戸光圀の梅里先生碑 (Mito: Mito shigakkai, 2004).
[28] Miki Miyuki 三木幹之, *Tōgen iji* 桃源遺事 (Forgotten Stories about Mitsukuni), in Nagoya Tokimasa 名越時正, *Mitogaku no tassei to tenkai* 水戸学の達成と展開 (The Making and Development of the Mito School) (Mito: Mito shigakkai, 1992). It is said that Mitsukini, on New Year's Day, put on a court costume and worshipped in the direction of Kyoto, shouting "my lord is the emperor. The present shogun is the head of my family." See Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, p. 32.

loyalism. He wrote: "He [Nitta] had high moral standards. Although he failed in his times, his offspring [the Tokugawa] succeeded. Heaven blesses loyal people."[29] In the late Tokugawa period, the Mito School turned increasingly emperor-centered and royalist. The attitude towards the bakufu among Mito historians became less supportive. Fujita Yūkoku 藤田幽谷 (1774-1826), a Mito historian who participated in the *Dai Nihon shi* project, referred the Edo bakufu "a hegemonic career." (*hashu no gyō* 覇主の業).

Dai Nihon shi adopted the traditional view of the separation of sovereignty and governance. Mito historians agreed that while the imperial house continued to reign, the Edo bakufu received heaven's mandate to govern. In *Dai Nihon shi*, following the Chinese historiographical style, the emperors were listed in the *honki* 本紀 (imperial annals), whereas the ministers were put under *rekiden* 列傳 (collection of biographies). How to locate the Tokugawa shogun was a thorny issue as he was neither the emperor nor an ordinary minister. To address this dilemma, *Dai Nihon shi* created a new category, *shōgunden* 將軍傳 (biographies of the shoguns).[30] Since the bakufu was a de facto central government, it also added *shōgun kazoku rekiden* 將軍家族列傳 (biographies of the shogun family) and *shōgun kashin rekiden* 將軍家臣列傳 (biographies of the retainers of the shogun) to accommodate the political reality.

Nihon gaishi outlined the history of the warrior families from the Genpei War to the late Tokugawa. Rai Sanyō rated the warrior families from their ability to implement feudalism. He considered feudalism the best system created by the ancient sage-kings in China, and it was finally successfully established in Japan under the Edo bakufu. He remarked:

[29] Quoted in *Edo no rekishika*, p.143.
[30] Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology*, p. 46.

> Feudalism originated in the time of the Minamoto family and was completed under the Ashikaga shogunate. The Ashikaga shogunate suffered before enjoying any benefit. The Oda and Toyotomi families continued to encounter its drawbacks and did not find the solution. Finally our Tokugawa family came.... Having learnt from the lesson of the two families, the Tokugawa shogunate adopted a middle-of-the-road approach and improved the situation gradually. Making a balance between internal and external forces, [the *bakuhan* system] could last for ten thousand years. Feudalism was firmly established and could not be destroyed.[31]

Rai Sanyō believed that Chinese-style "revolution" and dynastic change did not fit in Japan because it had the unbroken line of the reigning imperial family. He rated Tokugawa Ieyasu highly for showing due respect to the imperial family and providing protection. He remarked:

> Duke Tōshō 東照公 [Tokugawa Ieyasu] was patient and extremely clever. He had incredible military ability and a passion for knowledge. He loved people and treated his guests nicely. He made decisions that had a far-reaching impact for a hundred generations. He served the imperial court with extreme humbleness and reverence, regarding the protection of the emperor as his own duty.[32]

Regarding the long Tokugawa peace, Sanyō's comments were ambiguous and ambivalent. For instance, in the end of *Nihon gaishi*, he wrote the following remarks on the eleventh shogun, Tokugawa Ienari 德川家齊 (1773-1841): "Since Minamoto and Ashikaga, he was the only warrior appointed great minister (*daijōkan* 太政官). The military house has brought peace to the nation and reached its peak."[33] It sounded more like a warning than compliment.

Tokugawa historical writings treated the imperial family in a different manner, ranging from the imperial loyalist *Dai Nihon shi*, *Nihon gaishi*, and *Chūchō jijitsu,* to the ambiguous and fence-sitting *Honchō tsugan*, and the pro-bakufu *Tokushi yoron.*[34] *Dai*

[31] Rai Sanyō, *Nihon gaishi ronsan* 日本外史論贊 (Commentary on the *Nihon Gaishi*) , Dai Nihon shisō zenshū kankōkai 大日本思想全集刊行會, ed., *Dai Nihon shisō zenshū* 大日本思想全集 15: *Rai Sanyō shū* 賴山陽集 (Tokyo: Dai Nihon shisō zenshū kankōkai, 1933), pp. 76-78.
[32] Rai Sanyō, *Nihon gaishi*, in Tsukamoto Tetsuzō, ed., Vol. 2, Chapter 22, pp. 1001-2.
[33] Ibid., p. 1045.
[34] Kate Nakai, "The Tokugawa Confucian Historiography: The Hayashi, Early Mito school and

Nihon shi was one extreme. By stressing the unbroken lineage of the imperial family, the importance of the moral obligation of the subject to the lord (*taigi meibun* 大義名份), and the distinction between the kingly way and the hegemonic way, Mito School historians expressed imperial loyalism explicitly.

The loyalist expression in *Nihon gaishi* was not as explicit as in *Dai Nihon shi*. While praising the military warriors for bringing stability and feudalism to Japan, Sanyō was saddened to see the fall of the imperial house. He wrote: "In *Nihon gaishi* I wrote that it first introduced the Minamoto and Taira families. I could not help sighing for the imperial house for losing power. The change of time was beyond the control of human beings."[35] His support for the Southern Court and the idea of the distinction between the kingly way and the hegemonic way also indicated his loyalist sentiments. Both *Dai Nihon shi* and *Nihon gaishi* had an impact on loyalists in the *bakumatsu* period.

Honchō tsugan represented the middle of the road. Hayashi Gahō admitted the co-existence of Edo bakufu and Kyoto court as two central governments and paid respect to the imperial family and the Southern Court. Regarding the unbroken line of imperial succession, he made the following cogent comment: "Between Jinmu and Go-Yōsei, Japan had 108 emperors. During this period, the line of imperial succession experienced termination and revision, and alternative succession of the two branches. They happened within the imperial family."[36]

Tokushi yoron was on the other side of the political spectrum. Written as a history to glorify the military house, it sidelined the imperial house. Arai Hakuseki also demystified legendary emperors and the imperial regalia in his *Koshitsū* 古史通 (Understanding Ancient History, 1716). In *Tokushi yoron*, Arai Hakuseki went so far as

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Arai Hakuseki," pp. 62-91; Kate Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[35] *Nihon gaishi ronsan*, p.13.

[36] *Honchō tsugan*, vol. 1, p. 7.

to endorse Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's acceptance of the title of "the king of Japan" from the Ming dynasty. He wrote: "He made himself known outside Japan. Appointed by the emperor of the Great Ming dynasty, he earned his reputation overseas."[37] From the perspective of Confucian concept of *zhengming* 正名 (rectification of names), Yoshimitsu did something highly inappropriate and even treasonable. Rai Sanyō condemned him without reservation in this matter. Fujita Yūkoku reminded the Edo bakufu not to challenge the sovereignty of the imperial family in his *Seimei ron* 正名論 (On the Rectification of Names, 1791). He wrote: "The sky cannot have two suns. A nation cannot have two kings. Our nation has the real emperor, and thus the shogun should not claim to be the king. His governance is not the kingly way."[38] Interestingly enough, Hakuseki twisted the meaning of *zhengming* to the exactly opposite position. Instead of the traditional interpretation of *junjun chenchen* 君君臣臣 (a king should behave like a king; a minister should behave like a minister) as expounded in the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects of Confucius), Hakuseki insisted that the shogun was the de facto ruler and thus it was proper for him to use the title of king as commensurate with his authority.[39] He endorsed Yoshimitsu for accepting the title of "the king of Japan" because "although he was a minister by title, he was actually the opposite."[40] This kind of rhetorical appropriation turned the meaning of the Chinese term upside down, showing a high level of localization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan.

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[37] *Tokushi yoron*, in *Nihon shisō taikei* 35: *Arai Hakuseki*, p. 368.
[38] Fujita Yūkoku, *Seimei ron*, in Imai Usaburō 今井宇三郎, Seya Yoshihiko 瀬谷義彦, and Bitō Masahide, annot., *Nihon shisō taikei* 53: *Mitogaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1973), p. 371.
[39] Bitō Masahide, "Arai Hakuseki no rekishi shisō," 新井白石の歴史思想 (Historical Thought of Arai Hakuseki), in *Nihon shisō taikei* 35: *Arai Hakuseki*, pp. 563-65.
[40] *Tokushi yoron*, in *Nihon shisō taikei* 35: *Arai Hakuseki*, p. 369.

Concluding Remarks

Due to different historical developments and political traditions in China and Japan, Chinese concepts of legitimacy could not be applied to Japan without major modifications. Tokugawa historians demonstrated a high level of flexibility and creativity in their discussion of political legitimacy. They had three different attitudes towards imported Chinese concepts of legitimacy: namely, acceptance, refusal, and revision. Ideas such as blood lineage and morality that did not go against the political ethics of Japan were accepted. Others such as the distinction between the Han and the barbarians, the five circulatory phases, and the transmission of the sagely way were flatly refused admission because they were considered irrelevant, far-fetched, or inapplicable. Some Chinese concepts were reinterpreted to fit into the Tokugawa system. For instance, the mandate of heaven was used primarily to discuss the right to govern and denied a Chinese-style "revolution" and dynastic change. Rectification of names became a means to justify the authority of the shogun. Perhaps more significantly, Tokugawa historians created their own concepts of legitimacy, such as the theories of imperial regalia, reverence for the emperor, historical trends, and feudalism. These Japanese interpretations of legitimacy were made in Japan and could not be found in China.

This study has demonstrated two important features in Sino-Japanese intellectual interchange and Tokugawa intellectual history. First, Chinese concepts did not always fit neatly into the Tokugawa system, and thus they were subject to localization through reinterpretation and revision. Second, the Tokugawa system provided sufficient intellectual space for historians to creatively develop their historical views. By redefining legitimacy, Tokugawa historical writings rationalized the establishment and authority of the Edo shogunate, the *bakuhan* system, the delicate bakufu-court relations, and the political implications of Shinto.