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Uji and *Be*: The Genealogy of Ancient State in the Era of State Formation in Japan

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As readers are surely aware, the discourse on ancient statehood and state formation in the field of philological history had grown stagnant until recently. One reason was, many scholars in this area chased after archeological insights. Another factor was that, amid increasingly detailed critical analyses of ancient materials, it became challenging to look back at a time before the text was composed.

The biggest reason might be that research on Japan's ancient (古代: *kodai*: approx. 57‐1192CE) period had come to understand the limitations of applying Marxist historical materialism (and transformation associated with such), which as a rule endeavors to find logical sequences in history, to Japan or East Asia. In a previous work on state formation in ancient Japan, I posited necessary and sufficient conditions for ancient state formation.[1]

In that work, I challenged the view that a state is formed by elites appropriating property through plunder. Rather, I argued, a state is predicated on rulers taking an interest in the common good and, to a greater or lesser extent, establishing a system of taxation. I concluded that all conditions of a state are met with a taxation system in which the basic units targeted in the tax system are not agricultural tracts but individuals, even though it is not a fully-fledged poll tax.

Discourse on ancient statehood emphasizes the emergence of bureaucratic institutions, particularly those for tax. In the case of Japan, the emergent tax institutions targeted people rather than land, meaning that the people levying tax had to survey and categorize the nobles and commoners. The taxation structure that arose required subjects to provide labor services or goods. Taxes for the powerful nobles were based on the system of *shisei* (氏姓: *uji/kabane*), which requisitioned resources from the *shizoku* (氏族: similar to clans). Taxes for commoners, on the other hand, were based on the systems of *hito* (人: individuals) and *be* (部: occupational groups).

Both sets of systems served as crucial elements in the state institutions referred to in the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀: The Chronicles of Japan); they proved critical in cementing administrative structures linked to the *kuni-no-miyatsuko* (国造制: provincial governors) and *miyake* (ミヤケ: directly ruled territories and administrative institution).

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For this reason, the shizoku themselves must have played a cardinal role in the state, one that went beyond simply advising the *ōkimi* (大王: the overlord) aka the *Tennō* (天皇: "heavenly ruler" = the Emperor).

1. The *Shizoku* and the *Shisei* System

The present article reexamines the shizoku and the shisei system,[2] but before proceeding further we should clarify the facts about the shizoku, from which the shisei system derived.

In the past, the shizoku were often abstractly referred to as the *shizoku-seido* (氏族制度: shizoku system), but this was a misnomer. The misnomer arose because consanguineal (related by blood) and affinal (related by marriage) groups, which we might call "clans" in English, were represented in Chinese text using the character 氏 (read as *shi* in the Sino-Japanese reading and as *uji* in the native Japanese pronunciation). In China itself, the characters 氏 (*shi*) and 姓 (*sei*) had long been used interchangeably, such that the meaning of each character had become ambiguous by the time the Chinese writing system arrived in Japan. Consequently, the 姓 character gained a broad range of usages in Japan; the possible referents included uji (clan), *kabane* (hereditary title), or sei (uji/kabane). To enable consistent academic nomenclature, I for one distinguish between the terms as follows: I define 氏 as uji, 姓 as kabane, and sei as "*shisei*" (氏姓 uji/kabane).

The origin of the 氏 misnomer is related to a phenomenon that, despite having been highlighted by Motoori Norinaga (本居宣長: 1730–1801CE), went largely unnoticed until the postwar years, when it was highlighted afresh by the likes of Naoki Kojiro (直木孝次郎)[3] and Yoshie Akiko (義江明子)[4] and became an established narrative: the shizoku were political associations. While they were primarily based on true kinship (血縁親族集団: consanguineal or affinal ties), they were more akin to the *gentes* of ancient Rome in that they were political associations and included fictive kin (social ties based neither on consanguineal nor affinal ties), even if their numbers were trivial by comparison. Such fictive kinship derived from a form of clanship in which people shared the same *oya-gami* (祖神: ancestral deity) or *besso* (別祖) who otherwise affiliated with the same clan (同祖関係: *dōso kankei*). Accordingly, scholars started referring to these groups using the rather clunky term "fictive clanship-kinship ties" (擬制的同祖同族関係: *gisei-teki dōso dōzoku kankei*). As I discuss later, this fact explains why genealogy was highly valued in ancient Japan.

Inasmuch as they remained political associations, the shizoku were patrilineal.[5] A relatively clear-cut bureaucracy was applied to the shizoku: Leaders of *naoi-no-uji* (名負氏), meaning shizoku that bore an occupational title, would, besides the people they ruled, render services to the Yamato court according to their skills or craft, or contribute to the court commodities. Additionally, shizoku whose name derived from a territory were placed under the naoi-no-uji system, and the chieftains or other members of such shizoku were required to serve short tenures as a *giseikan* (議政官: legislative official), *toneri* (舎人:

imperial guard), or *shijin/tsukaihito* (使人), representing their lands.

In addition to serving the ōkimi, the shizuko members would also have served local lords, the *kisaki* (the ōkimi's consorts and concubines), and elite nobles (shizoku whose members include giseikan). Depending on the scope of their duties, they could potentially have been appointed to a miyake or to the primitive office of *kanshi* (官司). Thus, this system of appointment service was not dependent on the ōkimi's personal networks, and in this respect, the system can be deemed to have been a bureaucratic institution.

In what respects were the 姓 (uji/kabane/sei) like a bureaucratic institution?

In 684, Emperor Tenmu enacted a decree establishing the *Yakusa no Kabane* (八色の姓: eight category kabane) system, which established eight official kabane that would be bestowed shizoku would be consolidated into eight official kabane. The decree establishing the Yakusa no Kabane is recorded in the Nihon Shoki entry for the tenth month of that year (天武天皇 13 年: thirteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tenmu):

詔曰、更改二諸氏之族姓一、作二八色之姓一、以混二天下万姓一。一曰、真人。二曰、朝臣。三曰、宿禰。四曰、忌寸。五曰、道師。六曰、臣。七曰、連。八曰、稲置。

It seems that by this stage, there was some desire to formally consolidate and rank the kabane, and enshrine them as indicators of ancestral origin. However, except for the *Mahito* (真人), the decree mixed up the details of the ancestral origins and, for the official kabane after *Imiki* (忌寸: the fifth to eighth kabane of the eight kabane), it failed to record which shizoku the kabane in question was to be conferred upon. Perhaps because of these shortcomings, the decree had limited effect in practice, with many shizoku retaining their existing kabane.

We might well ask how the kabane had been conferred prior to the decree on the *Yakusa no Kabane*. However, scholars have shown little interest in the criteria by which shizoku were conferred a kabane.

I have only recently started asking this question, and seem to have caught a few people's attention so far.[6] Space constraints prevent me from discussing specific kabane in detail, but I should point out that

scholars have a flawed understanding about each of the kabane.

Scholars have posited a range of possible criteria for conferring a kabane; variables include those related to the shizoku's origins, whether the shizoku is deriving its name from territory or an occupational post, and whether it is independent. However, in each case, the details remain vague, with multiple defining characteristics being cited. Most of the attributes cited as defining characteristics for a given kabane have been shown to apply to other kabane too; additionally, numerous exceptions have been noted. This may all come across as rather abstract here; in my previous work, cited in Note 6, I made clear that even if the matter of independence was out of question, the shizoku's origins and the issue of whether it was a naoi-no-uji were irrelevant.

I contend that the real criteria comprised whether the shizoku rendered labor services and goods as a naoi-no-uji, and whether it contributed to such on a short-term, long term or as-needed basis. However, I do accept that the Yamato court also requisitioned goods and services from those *ujibito* (氏人: shizoku constituents) who did not render core naoi-no-uji services, as well as from the uji-no-bito of shizuko who supplied services or goods. These members may have contributed to the court directly, or they may have contributed indirectly, such as by supplying the *uji-no-kami* (an officially recognized chieftain of a shizoku) or the commissioned members. I am currently working on another article about the kabane system, which I hope will move the discourse forward.

What is the current scholarly view on the origin of the shisei (uji/kabane)? Scholars once traced the uji and kabane back to the fifth century, but over the past several decades, scholars have suggested that they originated in the sixth century. The *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀) records the first instance of a "bestowal of a shisei" (賜氏姓: *shi-shisei*). The record states that the kabane was bestowed upon the *Sarume no kimi* (猿女君) in the years before the reign of Emperor Jimmu. Suffice it to say, however, this source has limited reliability. We find no mention of any shisei among the prominent metal or stone engravings, such as the *Inariyama* Sword (a fifth-century iron sword excavated from Inariyama *Kofun* (古墳: burial mound), in Saitama Prefecture) or the *Eta Funayama* Sword (a fifth-century iron sword excavated from Eta Funayama Kofun, in Kumamoto). We do, however, find such a reference in a later engraving: the Suda Hachiman Shrine Mirror (in Hashimoto, Wakayama Prefecture). In the text, the character 直 (*atai*: an older rendering of kabane) is used as an appellation in "*Kawachi no Atai*" (開 [or 帰] 中費直). The text states that the mirror was made in the year of the water-sheep (20th year of the Chinese sexagenary cycle). This date probably corresponds to 503, and thus represents evidence of shimei's use at the start of the sixth century. Given that this mirror includes a reference to a shisei while the fifth-century artifacts do not, we can conclude that shisei originated around the start of the sixth century.

Reagrding the causal factor behind the introduction of shisei (uji/kabane), in the absence of any clear historical source on the matter, the prevailing scholarly view is that shisei were established through *ku-katachi* (盟神探湯, trial by ordeal) during the reign of Emperor Ingyō, and that this origin had been forgotten by the time the Nihon Shoki and Nihongi were commissioned, in the seventh and eighth

centuries.

I conject that the concept of shisei came into use around the time that formal exchanges with successive Chinese emperors ceased, and that it was inspired by the Chinese use of ancestral names (姓: sei). Whereas in the past the five kings of Wa had strengthened their legitimacy in Wa by receiving titles from the Chinese emperor, once relations with China ceased, rulers opted to confer shisei on their subjects as an alternative strategy for elevating their regal authority in Wa. Thus, the shisei came into use as a means for the sovereign to represent his regal authority to bestow titles and solidify the internal apparatus of the state. The royal family—the Imperial House (皇族: *Kōzoku*)—had no shisei of its own, symbolically denoting the distance between the sovereign and the subjects.

Earlier, I mentioned in passing the uji-no-kami (officially recognized chieftains), the men who provided the centrifugal force for their shizuoku. I shall now discuss the uji-no-kami in greater detail.

Each shizoku already had its elders and seniors who would occupy senior positions at court. However, such appointments were not set in stone, and within the prominent shizoku, members would often wrangle with each other over the plumb posts, much like royals vying for status. Within the Soga-uji, for example, the head of the *Sakaibe* (a branch of the Soga-uji) took the post of giseikan in the teeth of opposition from other members.

To end the strife, a succession of edicts, known as the *Kasshi no Sen* (甲子の宣), were passed to officially clarify who holds the rank of uji-no-kami.

Source 1: *Nihon Shoki*, Third Year of the Reign of Emperor Tenji [664], Month 2
(『日本書紀』天智三年（六六四）二月丁亥条)

天皇命二大皇弟一、宣下増二換冠位階名一、及氏上・民部・家部等事上。〜中略〜其大氏之氏上賜二大刀一。小氏之氏上賜二小刀一。其伴造等之氏上賜二干楯・弓矢一。亦定二其民部・家部一。

According to the entry, a decree was passed in 664, consolidating the grades of uji-no-kami into three and granting to each grade regalia denoting that grade: Heads of *ō-uji* (大氏: greater clans) were granted long swords; heads of *ko-uji* (小氏: lesser clans) were granted short swords; heads of shizuku that bore the

kabane "*Tomo-no-Miyatsuko*" (伴造: a kabane given to a shizoku that performed the role of *kuni-no-miyatsuko*) were granted shields and bows and arrows. The Nihon Shoki entry for the tenth year and eighth month of the reign of Emperor Tenmu (681) records that chieftains not yet officially recognized as uji-no-kami were ordered to apply to the *Osamuru-tsukasa* (理官: the precursor to the 治部省, *Jibu-shō*, or Ministry of Ceremonies). An entry for the following year states that the same order was sent again to those who had still not gained recognition, and an edict was passed allowing shizoku with many members to divide into branch-*uji* (分氏: *bunshi*).

These decrees marked a belated attempt to officially recognize and incorporate the uji-no-kami. The intention might have been for a quid pro quo: in return for officially recognizing the chieftains, the Emperor would exercise indirect rule over the shizoku through the mediation of the uji-no-kami thereby placating the shizoku.

Source 2: *Shoku Nihongi*, First Year of the Reign of Emperor Monmu (697), intercalary month 12, kōshin (『続日本紀』文武元年（六九七）閏十二月庚申条)

禁二正月往来行一二拝賀之礼一。如有二違犯者一、依二浄御原朝庭制一、決罰之。但聴レ拝二祖父兄及氏上者一。

The edict suggests that uji-no-kami were critical to the honor of the shizoku, and that they continued to play a vital role in facilitating the court's shizoku policy while developing the *Ritsuryō* system (律令制: *Ritsuryō-sei*) and under the system after it was established. At this stage, uji-no-kami were chosen by the shizoku and then recognized and officially registered by the Emperor (in practice, by the Osamuru-tsukasa or Jibu-shō). In most cases, it was the people who were nominated as uji-no-kami that would go on to become chieftains of shizoku by virtue of the fact that they held senior posts at court.

Hideshige Nakamura deftly delineated the main services uji-no-kami rendered.[7] According to his categorization, uji-no-kami were authorized to conduct the following functions: 1) certify ujibito as their kinsmen, 2) store documents pertaining to the shizoku, 3) manage shizoku property, including inheritance matters for such, 4) supply female shizoku members to serve the court as *uji-me* (氏女: ladies in waiting), 5) manage their *uji-dera* (氏寺: the Buddhist temples built by a shizoku) and organize the Buddhist

services held there, and 6) manage their *uji-gami-sha* (氏神社, Shinto shrines built by a shizoku) and organize the rituals held there. The Emperor, by delegating these duties to the uji-no-kami, encouraged shizoku to consolidate or divide into bunshi, while softly permeating a form of indirect, arm's-length rule over the shizoku their uji-no-bito.

Although the authorities and characteristics of the uji-no-kami were subsequently upheld under the Ritsuryō regime. Once we get to the time of the *Yōrō-ryō* Code (養老令制: *Yōrō-ryō Ritsu-ryō*), there are very few instances of uji-no-kami being used interchangeably with the term *uji-no-mune* (氏宗). We do, however, find numerous references to *uji-no-osa* (氏長), a term that persisted into the Heian period with a slight change, becoming *uji-no-chōja* (氏長者).

Although some shizoku would remain naoi-no-uji under the Ritsuryō regime (examples included the *Imbe-uji* along with the *Nakatomi-uji*, and the *Kan'omi-uji* along with the *Hatoribe-uji*), the shizoku would morph into kinship associations that filled bureaucratic posts, Fujiwara-uji being the foremost example of such an uji. When the Ritsuryō was introduced, many shizoku were integrated into more powerful shizoku by the "re-bestowal of a shisei" (改賜氏姓: *kai-shi-shisei*). Consequently, the Shisei-sei increasingly became a dead letter. Nonetheless, the practice of identifying with one's *honsei* (本姓, original hereditary name) as a marker of ancestry persisted into the medieval era (中世 *Chūsei*: approx. 1185 CE–approx. 1585 CE), the early-modern era (近世 *Kinsei*: approx. 1568–1867 CE), and even the modern era (近代 *Kindai*: approx. 1853–1945 CE), when the Empire of Japan had a system of *Kazoku* (華族, hereditary peers).

2. The *Be* and the *Be-sei*

Of the subjects who had been bestowed a shisei, some ranked higher than others. The higher-ranking ones had a direct sovereign-subject relationship with the Emperor. For lower-ranking subjects, the Emperor's rule was mediated not only through the system of the shisei, but also through a system of *be*, known as the *be-no-tami sei* (部民制: *be* people system).

The *be* system stemmed from a previous incarnation, the *hito* system. Introduced in the late-fifth century, the hito system organized commoners according to personal appellations (人: *hito*). The *be* system itself was introduced in the early sixth century, around the time the shisei system was introduced, although I have argued that the shisei system preceded the *be* system to some degree.[8] The *be* system organized and registered commoners, using occupational (部: *be*) appellations.

We can find examples of *be* appellations in the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, but the earliest credible instances appear in the names of personages such as Prince *Hatsuse-be* (泊瀬部皇子: Hatsusebe no Miko; he was the son of Emperor Kinmei and he later ruled as Emperor Sushun), Prince *Anaho-be* of *Hatsukashi-be* (泥部穴穂部皇子: *Hatsukashibe Anahobe no Miko*), and Prince Isonokami-*be* (石上部皇子: *Isonokamibe no Miko*). A *be* appellation also appears in a sword inscription dated to the mid-sixth century.

Excavated from *Okadayama* No. 1 Kofun in Shimane Prefecture, the sword bears the name 額田部臣 "*Nukata-be no Omi*."

The following source suggests that the use of the *be* appellation to organize commoners ultimately originated in the year 471 (the 15th year of Emperor Yūryaku).

Source 3: *Nihon Shoki*, Fifteenth Year of the Reign of Emperor Yūryaku
(『日本書紀』雄略十五年条)

秦民分二散臣連等一、各随レ欲駈使。勿レ委二秦造一。由レ是、秦造酒甚以為レ憂、而仕二於天皇一。々々愛二寵之一。詔聚二秦民一、賜二於秦酒公一。々仍領二率百八十種勝一、奉二献庸調絹縑一、充二積朝庭一。因賜レ姓曰二禹豆麻佐一。

The evidence suggests that *be* appellations first came into use when the court organized and registered groups of artisans and naturalized (帰化渡来系: *kika-torai-kei*) people under the system of *Tomo-no-Miyatsuko* and Tomobe, as illustrated by the incident in the above entry concerning the *Hata* (秦) people (a naturalized people who traced their roots back the Qin dynasty), and also based on what happened to the *Aya-be* (漢部) in the following year (16th year of Emperor Yūryaku's reign). Alongside this, *koshiro* (子代) and *nashiro* (名代) appellations, which derived from the name of a monarch, were chiefly used to organize the agrarian peasantry. Illustrating this, the household registry for the *Shimōsa* province (下総国) contains numerous family names like *Anaho-be* (穴穂部 also rendered as 孔王部) and *Kasuka-be*.

We shall now explore the use of *be* appellations further. *Be* occupational groups were valued as sources of labor and talent for the Yamato court. These be contributed to services in two ways.

From the two main forms of service, I have identified three categories of cases for a *be* appellation: (1) the *be* was simply named after a concrete noun denoting the particular commodity or manufactured good that the *be* group provided; (2) the *be* was a Chinese character used to semantically represent a reading unique to Japan (roughly equivalent to a rare and archaic reading of Chinese character); 3) the *be* was named after a compound phrase that combined (1) or (2) with a verb. Thus, most *be* appellations were more specific and concrete than personal (*hito*) appellations were. Their specificity reflected the Yamato regime's desire to co-opt the *be* groups into the court bureaucracy.

However, *be* appellations were not always so specific. Some consisted of more abstract noun phrases

suffixed with *be*, such as *Yama-be* (山部: Mountain-*be*), *Kawa-be* (川部: River-*be*), or *Umi-be* (海部, Sea-*be*). Nor were they always so distinctive: in some cases, be appellations were synonymous with the appellations of other groups. For example, the "*kura*" (storehouse) in *Kura-be* (蔵部) had a synonymous counterpart in *Kura-hito* (倉人 sometimes rendered as 椋人 or 蔵人). All of this suggests that although the system of *hito* appellations slightly preceded the *be* system, the latter was created before the former had become commonplace. Therefore, it was used to group craftspeople and the agrarian peasantry into administrative units.

Examples of the first of the three kinds of *be* appellation include *Mato-be* (的部: Target-*be*), *Kura-be* (鞍部: Saddle-*be*), *Yugi-be* (靫部: Quiver-*be*), *Kanuchi-be* (鍛部: Smithery-*be*), *Nui-be* (縫部: Textile-*be*), *Nuri-be* (漆部: Dye-*be*), *Doro-be* (泥部: Earthworks-*be*; also 泊橿部 *Hatsukashi-be*), *Haji-be* (土部: Pottery-*be*; also 土師部 *Haji-be*), *Tatenui-be* (楯部: Shield-*be*), *Uge-be* (弓削部: Bow-*be*; also 神弓削部), *Yahagi-be* (矢作部: Arrow-*be*; also 神矢作部), *Ōanashi-be* (大穴磯部), and *Hatsukashi-be* (泊橿部). As these examples illustrate, most of these appellations refer to crafted goods, and in most cases to a piece of military equipment, everyday items, or ritual equipment.

Examples of the second of the three kinds of be-appellation include names that featured a nominalized verb, such as *Hatori-be* (服部; also 神服部), *Omi-be* (麻績部; also, 神麻績部), *Shitori-be* (倭文部), *Nishikiori-be* (錦部), *Nui-be* (縫部), *Nuri-be* (漆部), and *Some-be* (染部). In many cases, the appellation refers to everyday items (the 神 character was used when the group in question separately manufactured items specifically for ritual purposes).

Examples of the third kind include *Tamatsukuri-be* (玉作部, Jewel-making-*be*), *Kagamitsukuri-be* (鏡作部, Mirror-making-*be*), *Kaneuchi-be* (金作部, Gold-making-*be*), *Yahagi-be* (矢作部, Arrow-making-*be*), *Yamamori-be* (山守部, Mountain/forest-managing-*be*), *Takakai-be* (鷹飼部, Falcon-keeping-*be*), and *Totori-be* (鳥取部, Bird-catching-*be*). These types of *be* appeared after the first, suggesting that these groups were organized and registered as administrative *be* units later in time.

The presence of such *be*, which were apparently linked with the Tomo-no-Miyatsuko and Tomobe, came to *be* administered not just as political organizations, but also as organizations with a bureaucratic/administrative role. Scholars tend to automatically conclude that a neat unilineal hierarchy must have existed between shizoku and the *be-no-tami* that shared the same *be* name. I have often argued that this view needs to be challenged.

In cases where multiple shizoku shared the same shisei, with each of the shizoku having a "double-barreled" name (複姓: *fukusei*), the members of such shizoku would not always consider each other kin. This phenomenon was well illustrated in incidents concerning the *Monono-be* (物部) and *Nakatomi* (中臣) shizoku. Similarly, no unilineal hierarchy existed among the Monono-*be* and Nakatomi-*be*. The same can be said regarding those *be* regarded as elite landowners (私有民: *shiyūmin*) or *kakibe* (部曲). When the head house (本宗家: *honsōke*) of the *Soga* shizoku fell extinct, a separate branch line changed its title to Ishikawa-uji, yet the *Soga-be* remained, revealing the loose kinship ties between the two.

After the Ritsuryō system arrived, many occupation-based *be* retained their significance; as *shina-be* (品部), these *be* supplied the court with *nyūshiki-nin* (入色者). The *Engishiki* (延喜式) cites numerous cases and provides numerous stipulations suggesting that these *be* were prioritized for official posts. On the other hand, there were also many *be* whose actual significance declined to that of a group of commoners.

On a side note, some scholars argued that the institutions of state were not fully in place until the Ritsuryō system arrived, or that they were only truly in place in the early-modern or modern times, since even in the Nara period (710-794CE), the shisei and *be* systems did not extend to all subjects and there remained some people, other than the *sen* (賤 the underclass), who owned a shisei. This thinking is flawed. Even today, some people in Japan, and indeed in other countries, remain "off the grid."

3. Lineage Among the *Uji*

In the first section, I mentioned that the shizoku, as political associations, placed great value on succession and lineage. In this section, I explore this further.

The inscription in the Inariyama Sword, which offers valuable insights extending beyond the scope of this article, is well known for listing eight generations of ancestors in a passage beginning in the lines "*Owake Omi*: His remote ancestor was *Oho Hiko*…" (乎獲居臣上祖名意富比垝). The inscription was made to record the "origins of service" (奉事根原) of the sword-bearer; it states that his "ancestors served as chieftains" (世々為杖刀人首), "assisting the governance of the realm" (左治天下). This message implies that political ties and service to the sovereign were highly prized even before shizoku bore a shisei.

Some argue that lineage in this case meant line of succession to a particular office, but whether the post was being passed from a parent to a child is not really the issue. It was not only men from shizoku who served the sovereign; women served the court too, as maids (采女: *uneme*) for example. However, only men inherited the political ties to the Yamato sovereign, and they placed great importance on exhibiting such ties. The same applied for men with fictive clanship-kinship ties; despite having no true kinship, they would be treated as fellow kinsmen once they had been certified as fellow clansmen by the uji-no-kami.

Influenced by China, patrilineal inheritance increasingly became the norm among shizoku. Osteoarcheological findings[9] reveal a rising patrilineal trend from the middle of the Kofun period. This would explain why we also see a decline in the number of chiefess burials, a shift in the composition of grave goods, and a shift in the traits of the ōkimi. Archeological surveys are still not permitted in the burial mounds of the ōkimi, but we can assume that patrilineal transmission began at the top—in the office of ōkimi—and then trickled downward to the shizoku.

Although the evidence suggests that the shizoku, because of their political character, tended toward patrilineal descent, scholars have long considered shizoku in terms of bilateral descent,[10] to the extent that

bilateral descent almost became the consensus at one point.

These scholars cite two main lines of evidence. First, they cite cases where a shizoku applied to the court for a re-bestowal of a shisei and stated, as grounds for their application, that they erroneously bore a maternal shisei. Second, they cite genealogies that warrant critical analysis as historical documents.

We can reject the first line of evidence for two reasons: First, cases where the shizoku bore an erroneous shisei are not illustrative of normative succession. Second, the applications for a change of shisei are far from objective and trustworthy sources.

As for the second line of evidence, Toshiko Yoshikawa cited the *Tenjukoku Shūchō Mei* (天寿国繍帳銘, *Tenjukoku Shūchō* Mandala inscription) in *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō* (上宮聖徳法王帝説, biography of Prince Shōtoku) and the surviving fragments of *Jōgūki* (上宮記, records of the Crown Prince) in the Shaku Nihongi (釈日本紀, annotated Nihon Shoki).[11] I consider Yoshikawa's analysis of these sources to be plausible.

Regarding the Tenjukoku Shūchō Mei, I question whether this counts as a genealogical source in the first place. Either way, it does at least serve as lineage in presenting a family tree of kindred, one that extends to affinal ties—those related to "Toyotomimi no Mikoto (Umayato)" (等已刀弥々乃弥己等（厩戸）) by marriage. However, some have raised concerns about the source, including the need to consider the motives for producing this family tree and about how it was never intended to display bilateral descent. These arguments should be accepted. In short, the source is quite different in character to that of a shizoku genealogy.

Regarding the Jōgūki, this source is famous for being a genealogy of Emperor Keitai.
The above quotation is rather lengthy, but it serves to demonstrate that the genealogy preserved in the surviving fragments of Jōgūki was never intended to display bilateral descent or affinal ties. The paternal line dominates; even where maternal ties (through the sovereign's mother, Furihime no Mikoto) are shown, they are merely incidental to the patriline. It stands to reason that if the ancestors on the father's side were of equally noble origin, having noble blood on the mother's side would have been a bonus, but it is generally considered to have been secondary in importance. This is well illustrated in the fate of Prince Ōtomo (大友皇子, aka Emperor Kōbun). One good example is Prince Takaichi (高市皇子 Takechi no miko), who by virtue of being maternally descended from the Munakata no Kimi (宗形氏 or 宗胸氏), rose to the position of Dajō-daijin (太政大臣: Chancellor of the Realm) but never acceded to the throne. Another good example is that of Prince Ōtomo (大友皇子, aka Kōbun Tennō), who was the son of Iga no Uneme and was defeated in the Jinshin War.

Source 4: *Shaku Nihongi*, 13: *Jōgūki itsubun*
(『釈日本紀』巻十三所引「上宮記逸文」)

上宮記曰、一云、凡牟都和希王娶二淨俣那加都比古女子、名弟比売麻和加一生児若野毛二俣王。娶二母々思已麻和加中比売一生児大郎子、一名意富富等王、妹踐坂大中比弥王、弟田宮中比弥、弟布遲波良已等布斯郎女四人也。此意富富等王娶二中斯知命一生児乎非王。娶二牟義都国造、名伊自牟良君女子、名久留比売命一生児汗斯王。娶二伊久牟尼利比古大王一、生児伊波都久和希、児伊波智和希、児伊波己里和気、児麻和加介、児阿加波智君、児乎波智君。娶二余奴臣祖、名阿那爾比弥一生児都奴牟斯君、妹布利比弥命也。汗斯王坐二弥乎国高嶋宮一時、聞二此布利比売命、甚美女一、遣レ人召三（上自）二三国坂井懸〔県〕一而娶所レ生伊波礼宮治二天下一乎富等大公王也。父汗斯王崩（去）而後、王母布利比弥命言曰、我独持二抱王（子）一、无二親族部之国一。唯独難二養育一、比陀斯奉之云爾。将レ下二去於在祖三国命坐多加牟久之村一也。

In addition to penned biographies, we can find genealogies inscribed in stelae. The *Yamanoue* Stele (山ノ上碑) in Kumamoto Prefecture bears an inscription drafted by a Buddhist priest, *Hōkō Nagatoshi* (長利), in honor of his mother. Part of the inscription reads as follows: "*Kurome Toji* [Nagatoshi's mother] was a descendant of Takemori no Mikoto, who served as magistrate of the Sano no Miyake. Kurome Toji married Ogo no Omi. Ogo no Omi was a descendant of Shitatami no Sukune, the son of Niikawa no Omi. I am the child of Kurome Toji" (佐野三家定賜健守命孫黒売刀自。此新川臣児、斯多々弥足尼孫、大児臣娶生児。) This inscription was intended to record some of the mother's kin names, and not show Nagatoshi's bilateral descent or affinal ties. Inscriptions such as this sometimes referred to a maternal ancestor to augment the genealogical information on the father's side.

As I suggested earlier, one could still regard such sources as genealogies. Indeed, from these texts *tatekei-zu* (竪系図 or 縦系図, patrilineal family-tree diagrams) were produced showing vertical descent and horizontal kinship. Among the extant tatekei-zu, the most notable are the *Enchin Zokusei Keizu* (円珍俗姓系図, the family tree of *Wake-uji*) and the *Ama-be Chokkeizu*, both National Treasures.

Nevertheless, I maintain that these sources fail to reflect the sociological or anthropological realities of the shizoku, and that while much of the content cannot be examined, they possess limited credibility. I would like to discuss the "shizoku discourse" (親族論: *shinzoku-ron*), but I shall refrain from doing so. However, I would like to highlight that tatekei-zu emphasized patrilineal lineage, and that it was important to demonstrate patrilineal descent in ancient Japan.

Thus, in ancient Japan, it was important to gain recognition for clanship ties and patrilineal pedigree. Such criteria indicated your political ties to the Yamato court and the sway of your shizoku. The year 815 would see the completion of the *Shinsen Shōjiroku* (新撰姓氏録: an officially commissioned genealogical record of uji and kabane), which was compiled to reclassify genealogies and end the confusion created by shizoku changing their shisei. Additionally, although succession was later broadened with the practice of adopting an heir (養子: *yōshi*), the use of *myōseki* (名跡), naming conventions (where an individual is entrusted to inherit the name or brand of a family concern), and inheritance of the family estate, in all cases importance was placed on inheriting political status.

To revisit the inscription on the Inariyama Sword, even if this inscription does not show the actual direct lineage, the reference to the sword-bearer's ancestors serving as chieftains who facilitated the sovereign's rule clearly illustrates that genealogy was understood at the time in political terms. It was demonstrated based on the political roles of one's predecessors.

Final Thoughts

In this article, I discussed shisei (uji and kabane), *be*, the bureaucratic institutions designed around such, and the lineages among such. These are vast themes, and this article has dealt with a minor portion of the potential material. I focused my analysis on perspectives and claims already outlined in previous work, and I hope for vibrant exchanges with other viewpoints.

I apologize to the scholars whose work I used in this article; due to space constraints, I was unable to give full credit to the literature I cited, and I omitted titles and honorifics to avoid terminological confusion.

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The actual authorities allotted to *uji-no-gami* would have been a little broader. See the following for more information: Nakamura, Tomokazu. 2005. “Book Review: Nakamura, Hideshige. ‘Kodai shizoku to shūkyō saishi,’” *Journal of Historical Studies* 805: 44-47. (中村友一 (2005)「書評：中村英重著『古代氏族と宗教祭祀』」『歴史学研究』第805号, 44-47頁).

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When quoting from the following sources, I rendered the kanji in simplified form (新字体: *shinjitai*):

Nihon Shoki (日本書紀) (日本古典文学大系: *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*)

Shoku Nihongi (続日本紀) (新日　本古典文学大系: *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei*)

Shaku Nihongi (釈日本紀) (神道大系: *Shintō taikei*)

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