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La généalogie de Tokugawa Ieyasu et les avantages liés à la revendication du pouvoir

Lors d'un projet de recherche il y a quelque temps, j'ai découvert un point intéressant concernant Tokugawa Ieyasu, le seigneur féodal qui unifia le Japon au début du XVIIe siècle et premier shogun du Bakufu Tokugawa (徳川幕府, pouvoir militaire du clan Tokugawa). J'ai trouvé des notes en ligne indiquant qu'il se faisait appeler « Tokugawa Minamoto Ieyasu » (徳川源家康) dans certains documents administratifs[1] . Ceux qui connaissent les premières années de l'histoire du Japon savent que le clan Minamoto était un puissant clan issu de la noblesse et apparenté à la famille impériale. Il est notamment reconnu pour ses prouesses militaires, illustrées par quelques figures emblématiques de l'époque Heian à l'époque Kamakura. Quel est donc ce lien significatif entre la famille Tokugawa et ce clan ?

Avant le Japon moderne, il était courant de changer de nom. Les raisons étaient nombreuses : changement de lieu de résidence (nouveau), de profession, d'adoption, d'ascension sociale, etc.[2] . Dans la plupart des cas, des documents subsistants, tels que des journaux intimes, des registres familiaux ou des actes officiels, en apportent la preuve. Cependant, la validité de ces documents et les affirmations qu'ils contiennent font parfois l'objet de contestations importantes.

Dans cet article, nous nous intéresserons à Tokugawa Ieyasu et à l'histoire de la lignée qu'il a fondée. Nous aborderons son histoire personnelle, les raisons qui l'ont poussé à adopter un nouveau nom, ainsi que les liens de sa famille avec le clan Minamoto. Parmi les sources utilisées, on peut citer :

- Monde Tokugawa (Buke no Kamon no Yurai)
- Mikawa Komachi
- Umakomi à Ota-ku no Rekishi wo Hozon suru Kai
- Tokugawa Ieyasu no Genji Kaimei Mondai / 徳川家康の源氏改姓問題
- Tokugawa Ieyasu Kou

GENJI – HISTOIRE DE MATSUDAIRA

Ieyasu naquit dans la famille Matsudaira, originaire du village de Matsudaira, dans le district de Kamo, province de Mikawa (aujourd'hui ville de Matsudaira, préfecture d'Aichi). La famille Matsudaira était influente et exerça un contrôle absolu sur son domaine pendant de nombreuses années, faute de toute contestation. Après son accession au shogunat et la fondation du bakufu Tokugawa au début du XVIIe siècle, Ieyasu présenta la généalogie de sa lignée, qui atteste que la lignée Matsudaira descendait de Matsudaira Chikauji (松平親氏). Ce dernier est apparenté à la lignée Seiwa-Genji (清和源氏), l'une des nombreuses branches du noble clan Genji.

Personnages importants de la généalogie de Tokugawa Ieyasu. À gauche, le 56e empereur Seiwa (source : Wikipédia). À droite, Minamoto no Yoshiie (source : ukiyo-e.org).

Quelques points à comprendre concernant la lignée Seiwa-Genji :

- Cette lignée descend du 56e successeur, l'empereur Seiwa, ce qui en fait la plus puissante de toutes les lignées Genji.
- Toutes les lignées Genji descendent du clan Minamoto, une famille noble qui fut jadis l'une des nombreuses familles impériales de l'époque Heian.
- Bien qu'ils aient une longue histoire, le clan Minamoto est particulièrement réputé pour sa lutte incessante pour le pouvoir contre le clan Taira, qui a finalement abouti à la victoire à la fin de la période Heian

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(794-1185).

- L'un des principaux représentants de cette lignée Seiwa-Genji est Minamoto no Yoshiie (源義家, 1039-1106), considéré comme une figure légendaire servant de modèle aux braves guerriers en armure qui allaient plus tard se lever et faire du Japon un État militaire.

Voici une explication de la revendication de Tokugawa Ieyasu quant à son lien avec le clan Seiwa-Genji. Son ancêtre, Chikauji, descend du clan Serata , issu d'une scission de la lignée Nitta-Genji (elle-même issue du clan Seiwa-Genji originel). Le clan Serata quitta le manoir Nitta, situé dans le village de Tokugawa, pour s'établir plus tard dans le village de Serata, dans une autre partie de Tokugawa, au sein de la province d'Ueno. Selon différentes sources, au début de l'époque Muromachi (1336-1573), Chikauji et son père Arichika combattirent aux côtés d'autres guerriers contre le bakufu de Kamakura dans la région de Shinano, à l'est du Japon. Ils se trouvaient du côté des perdants et durent fuir la poursuite d'Ashikaga Takauji et de ses hommes. Incapables de regagner leur patrie, ils s'enfuirent dans la province de Sagami. Parvenu au temple Shōjōkō, Chikauji y prononça ses vœux et devint moine de l'école Jishu sous le nom de « Tokuami » (徳阿弥)[5]. Plus tard, il se rendit au village de Matsudaira, dans la préfecture de Mikawa, et devint membre de la famille Matsudaira en épousant la fille de Matsudaira Taro Saemon. Ainsi, Ieyasu affirme que sa lignée descend directement de Minamoto no Yoshiie par l'intermédiaire de Chikauji, et que ses ancêtres étaient connus sous le nom de « Tokugawa » du fait que le village de Serata se situait dans cette région.

Extrait de la généalogie Seiwa-Genji. Elle commence par l'image de gauche et se poursuit de haut en bas, puis continue à partir du haut de l'image de droite.

Ci-dessus figure un arbre généalogique que j'ai préparé, illustrant les générations qui se succèdent de Minamoto no Yoshiie à Matsudaira Chikauji. Il montre également comment certains individus ont changé de nom de famille, généralement en fonction de leur lieu de résidence, ce qui a donné naissance à de nouvelles branches familiales. Certains ont même procédé ainsi à plusieurs reprises. Chikauji, en bas de la deuxième image, est un exemple typique de changement de nom. Il semble qu'il ait porté le nom de « Tokugawa » à un moment donné, lorsqu'il résidait au village de Tokugawa, avant d'adopter celui de Matsudaira.

IEYASU ET SON CHANGEMENT EN TOKUGAWA

Looking into Tokugawa Ieyasu's personal history, he went through a period where his identity changed in stages before establishing the Tokugawa shogunate and ruling all of Japan. As a summary, he was known by the name of Takechiyo (竹千代) during his childhood. When he was given his ceremony of adulthood at the age of 16[6], his given name 1st changed to Motonobu (元信), then later to Motoyasu (元康) while working under Imagawa Yoshimoto, but kept his family name "Matsudaira" the same. He inherited the role of the 9th head of the Matsudaira clan, yet didn't spend much of his life with them in Mikawa after the age of 6, for he was sent away as a hostage[7] by his father, Matsudaira Hirotada. He was 1st under the care of Oda Nobuhide in Owari Province for 2 years, then later sent to his intended caretaker Imagawa Yoshimoto in Suraga Province, who lorded over Mikawa. Eventually, he would gain complete control over Mikawa when Yoshimoto died during the battle of Okehazama in 1560, which was the final of the ongoing war this individual had against the ambitious warlord Oda Nobunaga. His military career truly took off under the title of Matsudaira Motoyasu, and would continue especially after his identity undergone yet another change.

Artwork of Tokugawa Ieyasu as Shogun. From series "Mikawa Eiyuden" (三河英勇傳, The Great Heroes of Mikawa Province) by Utagawa Yoshitora. From Wikipedia.

In 1563 he would alter his first name, from "Motoyasu" to "Ieyasu". 3 years later, he would then change his family name from "Motoyasu" to "Tokugawa" as an official title from the Imperial court. While it is very common to have one's family name changed in relations to receiving an official rank with some sort of back story, there is none whatsoever in Ieyasu's case at the time. It would be many years later during the 1st year of the Edo period that Ieyasu would reveal that in his family's genealogy, which traces back to the Serata clan, there were a few individuals who bore the name Tokugawa. It is through this connection that he believed it was best to reinstate this name. Some researchers question this as there was no mention of this in his earlier years, especially from someone who grew up away from his own clan members during his youth. Another interesting point that is mentioned is that members of Ieyasu's Matsudaira clan did not change their family name to Tokugawa after his rise in power, but did not hesitate to use this surname when needed.

QUESTIONING THE AUTHORITY TO POWER

By setting up the new Tokugawa bakufu in Edo (present day Tokyo), Tokugawa Ieyasu was able to establish rules, regulations, and territorial development process throughout Japan. Official documentations were also transcribed, which were used to retain all sorts of important information. Some examples of these are the Mikawa Monogatari (三河物語), which is a documentation of historical tales and accomplishments regarding families from Mikawa including the Matsudaira/Tokugawa, and the Kansei Chōshū Shokafu (寛政重脩諸家譜), which is a collection of many different genealogy, including that of land owners and military families. In these we can see the genealogy of Ieyasu, which claims an ancestral link to the Minamoto clan through the Seiwa-Genji line.

Despite these documentations, historians and researchers are skeptical about this claim. Some of these arguing points include the following:

- There is very little concrete info on those individuals who come before Chikauji
- There is no evidence of a Serata member migrating to Mikawa, let alone it being Chikauji
- Outside of Ieyasu's genealogy claim, there are no other details regarding a family lineage presented by other Matsudaira members

There isn't much solid proof of where such a well-detailed genealogy comes from. Taking his historical account into consideration, Ieyasu didn't spend a lot of his time in Mikawa, let alone amongst his Matsudaira clan members. This isn't an unusual case, to be honest. There are even some questions regarding those that come after Chikauji in this genealogy, but for this article I will refrain from discussing those, as they don't have the same weight as the ones mentioned above. What's interesting to note is that Imagawa Yoshimoto, Ieyasu's primary care taker in his early years, also claimed a link to the Seiwa-Genji lineage. Possibly this is where Ieyasu got the idea from and decided to follow suit?

Pics from the 1st volume of the 1922 edition of the Kansei Chōshū Shokafu (8 volumes total). To the right encircled in red is the beginning part of the Seiwa Genji line. From the National Diet Library Digital Collections

If there is solid ground for skepticism, what would be the benefit of fabricating a lineage? Understand that after military rule was established by Minamoto no Yoritomo as the 1st ruling Shogun during early Kamakura period (1185 ~ 1333), not just anyone could simply use force and claim the title as "shogun". It had to be acquired through the following 2 points:

1) Appointed by the Emperor

2) It could only be given to those of (according to very old beliefs and fables) "noble families that were descendants of the gods that created Japan and the world"

While we will not delve into the specifics of the 2nd point, we can sum this point up by the fact that the Minamoto clan, like many other noble families, was established with the proclamation of ancestry under a specific god, thus their connection with the Imperial court bearing the status of nobility. This link to nobility, along with other factors, is what granted Minamoto no Yoshiie the qualification to be appointed as shogun by the Emperor during his military career[8]. It is not hard to see the advantage of claiming rights to rule as Shogun through a link to the Seiwa-Genji lineage.

Claims to nobility wasn't something that only Ieyasu took advantage of, for there were others before him who used the same proclamation to acquire the shogun title. For example, the Ashikaga clan, whom had a long line of shogun successors throughout the Muromachi period (1336 ~ 1573), also did the same and claimed ancestry to the Seiwa-Genji lineage. Toyotomi Hideyoshi also dabbled in such play of claiming a link to nobility, for when he was able to rise to the top through superior military strength over his adversaries, he was initially faced with an issue that would prevent him from becoming shogun. The son of a lower class family, Hideyoshi was not born with a noble surname, meaning he had the blood of a mere commoner. To rectify this situation, he was advised, as well as permitted, to be adopted by an Imperial court noble named Konoe Sakihisa. Through this newly-established noble link, Hideyoshi was allowed to receive the title shogun from the Imperial court.

CONCLUSION

This research on Tokugawa Ieyasu's claimed genealogy, along with the critical disputes against it is an interesting one. It gives a glimpse of methods those who have the means can use in order to secure their position to achieve success or claim power. Even though this matter is centuries old, researchers still take the time to examine just how real the roots of the unifier of Japan truly is in order to understand the history of his ancestors…that is if any traces of it can be discovered. It's but one of the many ways to learn about the past and understand Japan when society was structured very differently from modern times.

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1) In a related topic, the online edition of Sankei News reported about a letter written in 1586, where Tokugawa Ieyasu used the title addressed as "Fujiwara Ieyasu" (藤原家康) in 1586. It appears that along with the surname change to "Tokugawa", Ieyasu initially wanted to elevate his status even higher through an ancestral link to the Fujiwara family. For those unfamiliar with this, the Fujiwara family were elite to the point that they were not only the most influential in the Imperial court, but they also had control of the Imperial house behind the scenes through manipulating which member of the Imperial family would be the next successor. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Ieyasu's predecessor, was another who used the Fujiwara surname at times after he established himself with a noble lineage.

You can see the actual news report here.

2) One of the more interesting cases I've heard is that some people would change both their given and family names if they feel their current ones are unlucky. To improve their luck, changing them to ones that are more appealing in meaning is a route that is seen as beneficial.

3) Also pronounced as "Serada"

4) The kanji (Chinese-bsed characters) for "Tokugawa" uses an older way of writing. There are different ways in which this name has been written throughout the ages. Here are the following:

- 德川 (most familiar)
- 德河
- 德川
- 得川
- 禿川
- 禿河

5) This is explained in the "Mikawa Monogatari" (三河物語). There is a slightly different take on this in an earlier publication called "Matsudaira Yuishogaki" (松平氏由緒書). This too presents descriptions regarding the Matsudaira genealogy, but for Chikauji's case he is not written to have been a monk. Instead, he left his hometown on a solo journey across the lands like a wanderer. Because of this, there are beliefs that this part about him becoming a monk is a fabrication, and added to later documentations.

6) This is known as "genpuku" (元服) in Japanese.

7) This "hostage" case is very common throughout Japan's history. Different from the idea of kidnapping by force, in many situations a clan that is controlled by another more powerful clan would send family members to reside with them. While these members are given to fulfill a particular need by the powerful clan, the gist of it is to keep those family members in order to control the lesser clan. There are also many political usages behind this.

8) Before the establishment of military rule, the title "shogun" had a slightly different nuance, along with a different manner of entitlement. During the Nara and Heian period, certain renown warriors who were recruited to deal with supposed threats (i.e. "barbarians" and "villains") to the Imperial palace and the aristocratic governing system would be given this title. In Minamoto no Yoshiie's case, his complete title was "Chinjufu Shogun" (鎮守府将軍), which has the full meaning of "Commander-in-Chief of the army which pacifies threats from the North".

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