

# Japanese Buddhism and Inheritance of Branch Families of the Imperial House: A Case Study of Fushimi-no-Miya in 18 Century

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Kajū-ji Temple in Kyōto  
( one of a *monzeki* temple)

## *miyake* 宮家

= branch families of the Imperial House

### PRE-MODERN TIMES

- limited only four households: Fushimi 伏見宮; Katsura 桂宮; Arisugawa 有栖川宮; and Kan'in 閑院宮
- adoption was allowed
- other than heirs became Buddhist monks at *monzeki* 門跡 temples

### MODERN TIMES

- the number of households was unlimited
- adoption was prohibited

# Monzeki Temples for Princes/Princesses

## *Miya-Monzeki* (for princes)

- Rinnō-ji Temple 輪王寺
- Myōhō-in Temple 妙法院
- Shōgo-in Temple 聖護院
- Shōkō-in Temple 照高院
- Shōren-in Temple 青蓮院
- Sanzen-in Temple 三千院
- Manju-in Temple 曼殊院
- Bishamon-dō Temple 毘沙門堂
- Enman-in Temple 圓滿院
- Ninna-ji Temple 仁和寺
- Daikaku-ji Temple 大覺寺
- Kajū-ji Temple 勸修寺
- Chion-in Temple 知恩院

## *Ama-Monzeki* (for princesses)

- Daishō-ji Temple 大聖寺
- Hōkyō-ji Temple 寶鏡寺
- Donge-in Temple 曇華院
- Kōshō-in Temple 光照院
- Reikan-ji Temple 靈鑑寺
- Enshō-ji Temple 圓照寺
- Rinkyū-ji Temple 林丘寺
- Chūgū-ji Temple 中宮寺
- Jijū-in Temple 慈受院
- Sanjichion-ji Temple 三時知恩寺
- Hokke-ji Temple 法華寺
- Zuiryū-ji Temple 瑞龍寺
- Sōji-in Temple 總持院
- Hōji-in Temple 寶慈院
- Honkō-in Temple 本光院



'Since the Middle Ages, *monzeki* system has begun, and even if many princes happen to be born, the system is automatically designed to end their own descendants, so that the imperial genealogy, which should be flourishing, is in reverse decline. This is extremely lamentable.

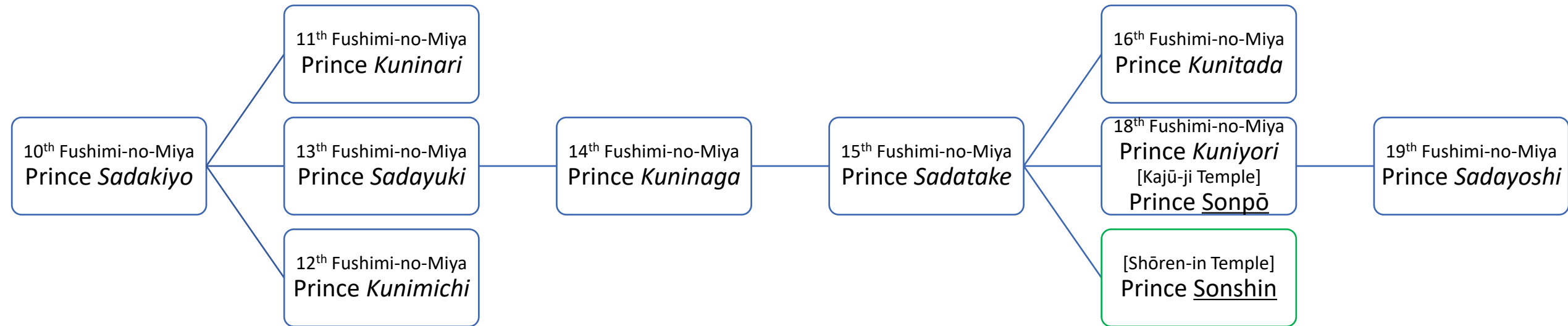
Everyone knows that this is a very harmful system, yet it has already become a centuries-old tradition of the Imperial Court, so there is not even the beginning of a discussion to change it.'



The practice of the princes becoming a Buddhist monk should be abolished and the emperor's son should be able to establish new *miyake*

*Sōbō kigen* 草茅危言 (1789)  
Completed by Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山

# Genealogy of Fushimi-no-Miya



- **Bold persons** are successive emperors
- *Italic persons* are successive heads of each *miyake*
- underlined persons are *monzeki*

[18-19c]



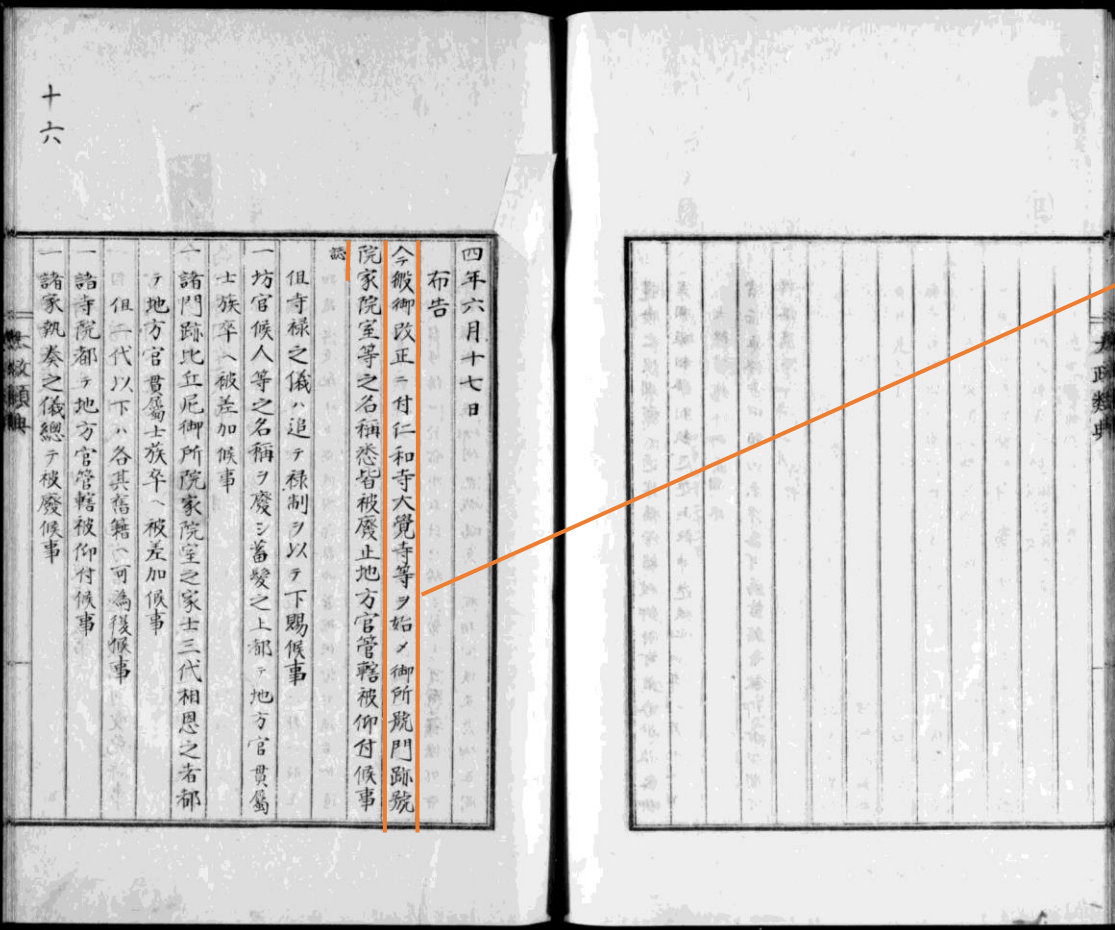
# Dual Structure of the Japan's Family Concept

*uji* 氏 (Clans) = succession

- Male-line lineage (in the main family)  
= dynastic continuity (in monarchs)
- ancestral rites
  
- Father-line lineage is an absolute requirement
- no ability needed

*ie* 家 (Households) = Inheritance

- family name
- family status
- family jobs
- properties
  
- male-line, female-line, adoption, whatever
- sometimes ability is important



The recent amendment to the law abolishes all titles for *monzeki* temples, including Ninna-ji Temple, and Daikaku-ji Temple, etc.

✘ Shinto is a state belief, NOT a religion.  
(policy of the Meiji government)



Buddhism was excluded from the Imperial Family in modern Japan

Grand Council of State, Meiji 4 (1871). 6. 17



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**Thank you for your attention.**

**御清聴有難うございました。**