

**Eurasia Foundation International Lectures, Fall 2021 Semester**  
**“Asian Community: The Construction and Transformation of East**  
**Asiaology” Lecture Series (16)**  
**Topic: Culture and Education Contribution of Mito Tokugawa: Focus on the**  
**Development of East Asian Civilization**

For the 16th lecture of Eurasia Foundation International Lectures, we invited Professor Tokugawa Maki, the Director of the Tokugawa Museum in Japan, to give a lecture entitled “Culture and Education Contribution of Mito Tokugawa: Focus on the Development of East Asian Civilization.” Curator Tokugawa said that she planned to come to Taiwan for this speech in person, but due to the ongoing epidemic, it can only be conducted online. It is a pity.

At the beginning, Tokugawa curator explained what the curator and the museum have done under the influence of the epidemic. For the past two years, they have been working on the Mito Tokugawa family forest management and remediation project passed down from their ancestors. Today the world is re-examining the importance of forests, as massive logging directly affects the global environment. Tokugawa Ieyasu’s grandson Mitsukuni left the following will: “We must never use the forest as a reward for our retainers.” He seems to have foreseen the problem of global warming caused by illegal logging, because he fears his retainers may log trees for money, affecting the local environment and future generations. The ancestors want to express that the tradition which the ancestors passed down to the descendants should not be forgotten. In other words, the inheritance of tradition in family is a common feature of Asia such as Japan and Taiwan.

The curator first demonstrated a photo of Nikko Toshogu Shrine (日光東照宮). Toshogu is dedicated to Ieyasu Tokugawa. In Japan, some religion tends to deify great people. Next, the curator displayed the Tokugawa family tree and introduced the family tree. The Tokugawa “Gosanke (御三家)” refers to Owari (尾張, now Nagoya), Kii (紀伊, now Wakayama), and Mito (水戸, now Ibaraki), each of which inherited by Ieyasu’s three sons, and ruled these area without war. Believing in the thinking that ruling the world is not by force but by technology and knowledge; Ieyasu encouraged his sons to learn knowledge. In addition, Ieyasu Tokugawa met Confucianist Hayashi Razan, embraced Confucianism, and devoted himself to collecting and protecting classic books. The fact that Confucianism has been valued can also be said to be a common feature of East Asia.

The curator explained while showing photos of the museum. The museum is a public interest foundation founded by the 13th Lord of the Mito branch of the Tokugawa clan, Kuniyuki Tokugawa. The basic principle of the Tokugawa Museum is “彰往考來 (jhang wǎng kǎo lái, to clarify the history and observe the future).” This thought was adopted from the Zuo zhuan (春秋左氏傳), and it is also the origin of the name “jhang wǎng kǎo lái.”

The first Lord of the Mito branch of the Tokugawa clan, Yorifusa Tokugawa not only maintained good relationship with Confucian scholars such as Hayashi Razan, but also learned Shinto. Moreover, Yorifusa recruited new talents from all over Japan.

Yorifusa's third son, Mitsukuni, was a famous person who is devoted to politics for the sake of citizens. He was also committed to publishing. One of the most famous publication was the compilation project of *Dai Nihonshi* (大日本史, History of Japan), which was a great work with 402 Volume and lasted 249 years. *Dai Nihonshi* was not an easy task to complete. It was necessary to collect ancient documents and historical materials scattered across the nation and then many scholars verified these materials to make sure they are correct. In addition, Curator Tokugawa also introduced the books *Reigi Ruiten* (禮儀類典, Collection of Records of Etiquette) and *Kyumin Myoyaku* (救民妙藥, The Miraculous Medicine for the People's Rescue) which were edited following the direction of Mitsukuni. The former was a book about imperial court ceremonies and events and it was edited in obedience to a command by the Emperor Reigen (靈元天皇). The latter was written for people to cure diseases and injuries. It is said that Mitsukuni printed the *Kyumin Myoyaku* with a woodblock printing and distributed it to the citizens.

*Mitogaku* (水戸学) is an academic thought school formed by the Mito Tokugawa family. The school incorporated Confucianism, Shinto studies, and Kokugaku (國學, national study) thoughts. Curator Tokugawa briefly explained each of the following three periods. Early *Mitogaku*: It was established with the compilation of Mitsukuni's *Dai Nihonshi*, and Confucian scholars such as Sassa Munekiyo (佐々宗淳) and Asaka Tanpaku (安積澹泊) played a central role. Mid-stage *Mitogaku*: Around the 18th century, it was prosperous with the introduction of the knowledge of Ogyu Sorai (荻生徂徠). Late *Mitogaku*: In the 19th century, in the face of the threat of foreign ships, a sense of crisis led to discussions related to national affairs. Scholars focus on national political issues and discuss what Japan should look like from an international perspective. Scholars including Fujita Toko (藤田東湖) were central figures.

Curator Tokugawa emphasized that *Mitogaku* is characterized by the compilation and publication business of books, through which talented scholars and people of all identities are brought together. In other words, *Mitogaku* is a humanism school.

Curator Tokugawa also showed us photos of "Monument Bairi-Sensei" and Zhu Shunshui's tomb and the map of the *Nishiyama Goten* (西山御殿, the Nishiyama Palace), *Gomaeda*, Cemetery of Mito Tokugawa Family.

At the end of the speech, Curator Tokugawa summed up with the following words. The world is changing a lot now, new ideas and perspectives are emerging, and traditional ideas are not impeccable. However, it is important to understand what should change and what should not. For example, forest management is one of thing that should sustain. At the same time, we want to introduce new things. This can be seen from the history of Mito. We cannot ignore the importance of human resource development and education. Asia has a spirit and historical heritage that values family and passes these spirits from

the ancestors passed down to the descendants. Taiwan also has this spirit. Therefore, she hopes Taiwanese learn the technology and knowledge that will create the future.

(Web link: <https://eurasia.pccu.edu.tw/index.php>)

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