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# Population Registers and Household Records as Sources for the Study of Urban Women in Tokugawa Japan

GARY P. LEUPP

The Tokugawa period (1603–1868) brought many changes to the lives of Japanese women. The officially mandated separation of warriors from peasants (*heino bunri*) resulted in the formation of large urban centers, in which women assumed roles significantly different from those of their sisters in the villages of pre-Tokugawa Japan. The growth of an urban-driven national market, meanwhile, produced new opportunities for some rural women, who succeeded as entrepreneurs or benefited as kin of wealthy peasants.<sup>1</sup> But the penetration of a money economy into the villages also promoted stratification among the peasantry, reducing many women to the status of landless laborers, prostitutes, or beggars.<sup>2</sup> Licensed “pleasure quarters” — an innovation of the late sixteenth century — grew dramatically during the period. These and their unofficial counterparts in post towns and elsewhere ensured that many impoverished peasants’ daughters would leave home on long-term contracts to brothel keepers and similar predators.

As such changes were taking place, the Tokugawa shogunate officially embraced, with greater fervor than any prior administration, the doctrines of Sung neo-Confucianism. These were arguably no more misogynistic than the tenets of most Mahayana Buddhist sects that had long flourished in Japan,<sup>3</sup> but supported by the full weight of the state apparatus, they were

more widely disseminated.<sup>4</sup> Such works as Kaibara Ekken's *Onna daigaku* (The great learning for women, 1672), *Hime kagami* (Mirror for young ladies, 1709), and *Onna kakun* (Precepts for women, 1720) emphasized women's putatively low and evil character: women were by nature disobedient, prone to anger, slanderous, jealous, stupid.<sup>5</sup> Their roles were to be restricted to child bearing (and even here their contribution was denigrated, as indicated by the contemporary expression *Hara wa karimono*: "The womb is a borrowed thing")<sup>6</sup> and household management. "Women's job," according to the *Hime kagami*, "is to work in the kitchen."

Having accepted this view of women's role in society, the regime acted to ensure that women remained subject to the "Three Obediences" (*Sanjū*) specified in the Chinese classic *Lieh Tzu*: "A woman has no way of independence through life. When she is young, she obeys the father; when she is married, she obeys her husband; when she is widowed, she obeys her son."<sup>7</sup> It granted male family heads the right to abuse or kill female dependents, or to sell them into prostitution. It allowed men the right to divorce their wives for virtually any reason.<sup>8</sup> It restricted female inheritance rights and banned women from numerous occupations.<sup>9</sup>

But the legal and literary evidence concerning women's status can only give us an incomplete picture. The history of sumptuary legislation, and efforts to control popular culture during this period, indicate that there was often a broad gap between ruling-class prescriptions for behavior, and the actual habits of the masses.<sup>10</sup> In particular, urban sophisticates had the tendency blithely to disregard much of the content of hortatory edicts and officially sponsored moral literature. To investigate the actual conditions of women's existence — as daughters, wives, spinsters, mothers, workers, dependents, managers, religious believers — we must turn to quantitative records, and the data that can be culled therefrom.

This paper discusses two categories of such records: population registers (*ninbetsuchō*) and household records, and their uses for scholars interested in the lives of Tokugawa women. I limit my attention to urban documents, since these have been exploited by historians less than the more abundant village records, and depict a more dynamic and complex society. They may also better reveal the divergence between officially and popularly approved constructions of gender. Since the documents deal only with urban commoners (*machikata*), my discussion largely omits reference to samurai

women, even though in some towns and cities they made up a substantial portion of the female population.

### THE FEMALE URBAN POPULATION

Since samurai populations were not recorded in the *ninbetsuchō*, it is difficult to calculate the number of urban women during this period. Even where the numbers of samurai can be roughly approximated, we usually can only guess about the sex ratio among them. But below are some figures on the *machikata* population in the five greatest cities of Tokugawa Japan — Edo, Osaka, Kyoto, Kanazawa, and Nagoya — during the first half of the period (see table 1).

Obviously the number of women in these cities was significantly lower than the number of men. More boys are born than girls, but these sex ratios are all well above the 105 figure considered normal by demographers.<sup>11</sup> They are not, however, necessarily higher than in agricultural villages: Susan Hanley's research on three villages in Okayama shows that sex ratios of 110 to 118 were common during the latter half of the Tokugawa period,<sup>12</sup>

Table 1  
SEX RATIOS OF COMMONERS IN MAJOR CITIES

CITY	YEAR	SEX RATIO (MEN PER 100 WOMEN)	RECORDED FEMALE POPULATION	RECORDED MALE POPULATION
Edo	1733	354	96,103	340,277
Osaka	1689	118	174,930	207,070
Kyoto	1715	116	139,872	162,883
Kanazawa	1697	109	65,644	71,628
Nagoya	1684	109	25,879	28,239

SOURCES: Edo: Nishiyama Matsunosuke et al., eds., *Edo gaku jiten* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1984), p. 698; Osaka: Saitō Osamu, *Shōka no sekai, uramise no sekai: Edo to Osaka no hikaku toshi-shi* (Tokyo: Riburoppotto, 1987), p. 130; Kyoto: Takahashi Bonsen, *Nihon jinkōshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1941), vol. 1, p. 239; Kanazawa: Hioki Ken, ed., *Kaga han shiryō* (Ishiguro Bunkichi, 1929–1933), vol. 5, pp. 386–388; Nagoya: Hayashi Tōichi, *Owari han manpitsu* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku, 1989), p. 166.

and Thomas Smith has shown that a village on the Nobi plain had a sex ratio of 114 during the period 1717–1830.<sup>13</sup> (National census figures show the sex ratio at 115 in 1732, steadily falling thereafter but still over 110 at the beginning of the nineteenth century.)<sup>14</sup> So these figures are not particularly exceptional except in the case of Edo, where the commoner population consisted largely of male construction and transport workers.<sup>15</sup>

Were the samurai population to be included, no doubt the figure would be even higher. By 1855, however, the sex ratio among Edo commoners was 105:100, and in Osaka, where the samurai were always few, the ratio was nearly down to 100:100.<sup>16</sup> However males may have preponderated in Tokugawa cities during most of the period, we can assume that, in the five largest cities during any point in the period, the number of nonsamurai women alone normally exceeded half a million. This suggests that roughly one in twenty-five Japanese women lived in a city of over one hundred thousand. Thus the construction of the female role in Tokugawa society was greatly affected by urban habits and institutions.

#### SURVIVING *NINBETSUCHŌ* OF URBAN WARDS

The most extensive series of urban *ninbetsuchō* provides us with our clearest, broadest window into the lives of urban women. Many scholars have used the extant population registers to address various historical problems, although few have focused specifically on the history of women in these cities.<sup>17</sup> Among others, Akiyama Kunizō, Hayami Akira, Imai Shūhei, Inui Hiromi, Masaoka Kanji, Matsumoto Shirō, Miyamoto Mataji, Saitō Osamu, Sasaki Yōichirō, Sugimori Tetsuya, and Tsuchida Ryōichi have all published work based on ward registers.<sup>18</sup> So have Western scholars such as William Hauser and Robert Smith.<sup>19</sup> I have used them in connection with research on urban labor.<sup>20</sup> But much remains to be done.

The amount of known, extant urban *ninbetsuchō* is small compared to the massive quantity of village registers. This fact does not result from any laxity on the part of urban record keepers, but reflects the devastation caused by the conflagrations that routinely leveled urban landscapes. Various scattered registers from individual urban wards survive, but only a handful of substantial data series, covering a decade or more, are known to have survived. Below is a partial listing of such series, with their locations.

*Osaka*

Dōshōmachi San-chōme (1659–1868), Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library (Osaka) [Ōsaka furitsu Nakanoshima toshokan]

Kikuyachō (1639–1868), Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library

Miikedōri Go-chōme (1700–1868), Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library

Kobikichō Minami no chō (1780–1868), Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library

Hiranomachi Ni-chōme (1779–1868), Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library

Sadoyachō (1832–1842), photocopies in the possession of Department of Japanese History, University of Osaka (Toyonaka-shi, Ōsaka) [Ōsaka daigaku kokushi kenkyūshitsu]

*Tennōji-mura*

Hirokoshimachi (1757–1858), Education Ministry Archive (Tokyo) [Monbushō shiryōkan]

Kubomachi (1757–1858), Education Ministry Archive

*Kyoto*

Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō (1685–1863), in private hands; microfilm in possession of Hayami Akira (Keiō University, Tokyo)

Hanagurumachō (1819–1868), Kyoto Municipal Historical Archive (Kyoto) [Kyōto-shi shiritsu rekishi shiryōkan]

Koromonotana Kitamachi (1786–1867), Center for Research on Urban Edicts (Kyoto University) [Kyōto daigaku machifure kenkyū kaisho]

Koromonotana Minami-machi (1786–1867), Center for Research on Urban Edicts

Shisuichō (1783–1857), Kyoto Municipal Historical Archive (Kyoto)

Taishiyamachō (1813–1864), Center for Research on Urban Edicts

*Takayama*

Ichi no machi (1819–1871), Takayama Local Archive (Takayama)  
[Takayama kyōdōkan]

Ni no machi (1773–1871), Takayama Local Archive

*Nagasaki*

Hiradomachi (1633–1659), Kyushu University Kyushu Cultural History  
Research Center (Fukuoka) [Kyūshū daigaku Kyūshū bunkashi  
kenkyūjo]

Okeyamachi (1742–1863), Nagasaki Prefectural Library (Nagasaki)  
[Nagasaki kenritsu toshokan]

*Kōfu*

Mikkamachi (1672–1870), Yamanashi Prefectural Library (Kōfu)  
[Yamanashi kenritsu toshokan]

*Kōriyama*

Kamimachi (1729–1868), Kōriyama City Library (Kōriyama)<sup>21</sup>  
[Kōriyama-shi toshokan]

Most of the series contain substantial gaps.

Note that only five of these series contain data for the seventeenth century. But for urban historians researching the late eighteenth century or nineteenth century, the surviving records are invaluable. They provide us with a wealth of information concerning women of various social strata. Osaka's Dōshōmachi San-chōme was a ward in the prosperous Senba district near the city's massive castle, well known for its medicine shops. Kikuyachō was a less affluent, mixed commercial ward bordering the Dōtonbori theater quarter. Neighboring Kobikichō Minami no chō ("Sawyers' Ward, South") was, despite its name, another ward of this type. Wholesalers and brokers (*nakagai*) resided in Hiranomachi Ni-chōme; Miiokedōri Gochōme, an affluent ward near the Shinmachi brothel district, was also known as a haunt of unlicensed prostitutes; Sadoyachō was a cheap brothel quarter.

In Kyoto, Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō constituted a bustling market street near the west bank of the Kamo River. It was an area well trafficked by pilgrims bound for the temples of the east bank as well as pleasure seekers headed for Gion and Shinbashi.<sup>22</sup> Here lived physicians, Confucian scholars, and artists such as Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795). Hanagurumachō was a less thriving ward, at least during the period covered by surviving *ninbetsuchō*. Located in the heart of the Nishijin silk-weaving district, it suffered from the general decline of Kyoto's textile industry in the early and mid-nineteenth century. In this ward, alongside a few fairly large-scale workshop households, lived small families of weavers, spinners, reelers, and dyers, often on the verge of destitution. Thus the registers log wealthy matrons as well as scullery maids; grocers' daughters alongside wet nurses; poor widows along with unlicensed prostitutes.

#### CONTENTS OF THE *NINBETSUCHŌ*

But what precisely were these documents? Since their origins and structure have been described in detail elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> I only briefly explain their nature here, then focus on the specificities of the urban registers.

In 1612 the Tokugawa shogunate renewed the ban on Christianity, which had been allowed to lapse since its initial imposition in 1587. The prohibition was thereafter enforced with increasing effectiveness, and pursuant to it, the regime established the practice of requiring virtually all members of society publicly to repudiate Christianity and affiliate with some Buddhist sect. The point was not so much to inculcate Buddhist piety; indeed, many among the intelligentsia regarded the Indian faith with condescension or contempt. Rather, the shogunate operated on the assumption that no true *Kirishitan* would conceal his or her allegiance and thus forfeit the imagined rewards awaiting martyrs in the Christian paradise.

In 1638 the shogunate began to compile *shū aratame chō* (records verifying religious sect affiliation), and in 1664, all daimyo (lords possessing lands with an assessed yield of 10,000 or more *koku*) were obliged to do the same in their domains. In 1671 it was ordered that such registers be compiled annually.

In some cases, registration was accompanied by the ritual of *fumie* (image trampling): each registered person would be obliged to tread on a picture of Jesus or the Virgin Mary to indicate contempt for the foreign Christian



1. Title page of *shūmon aratame ninbetsuchō* (religious population register) of Hanagurumachō, Kyoto, 1855. Religious sects represented in the ward are listed at the top. Kyoto Municipal Historical Archive.

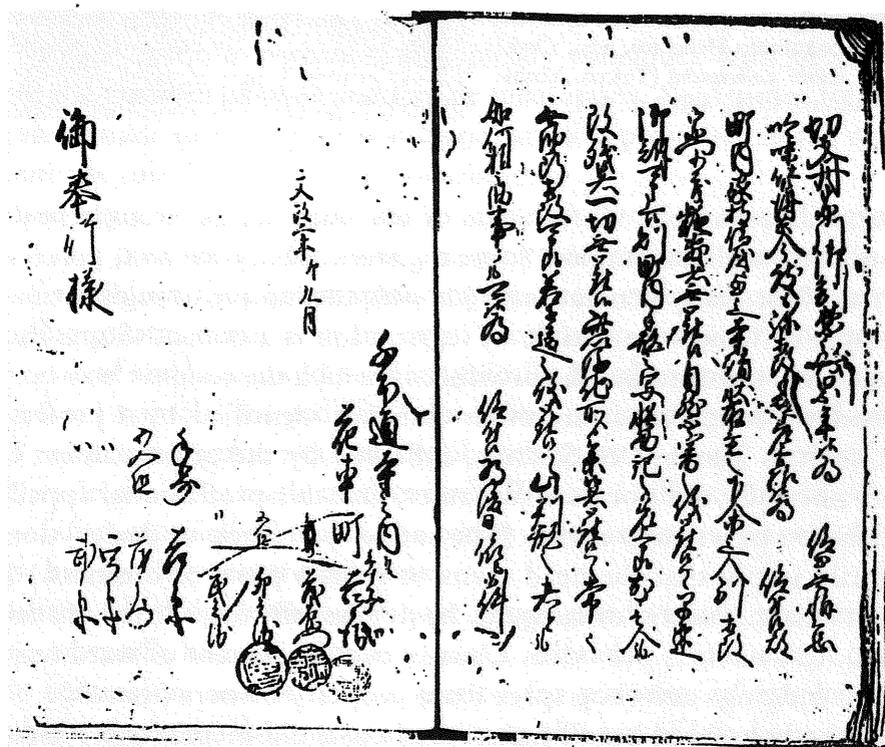
faith. Virtually all such records contain a statement such as the following, which appears at the end of the register for Kyoto's Hanagurumachō, dated 1819:

Since the Christian religion has been under a special official ban for many years, it is now again declared that [religious affiliation] will be invested with untiring diligence. To that end, this report has been prepared. As ordered, everyone in the ward, from householders and tenants to servants, possesses a temple surety certificate indicating religious affiliation. We will immediately report any dubious persons or anything suspicious to the authorities.

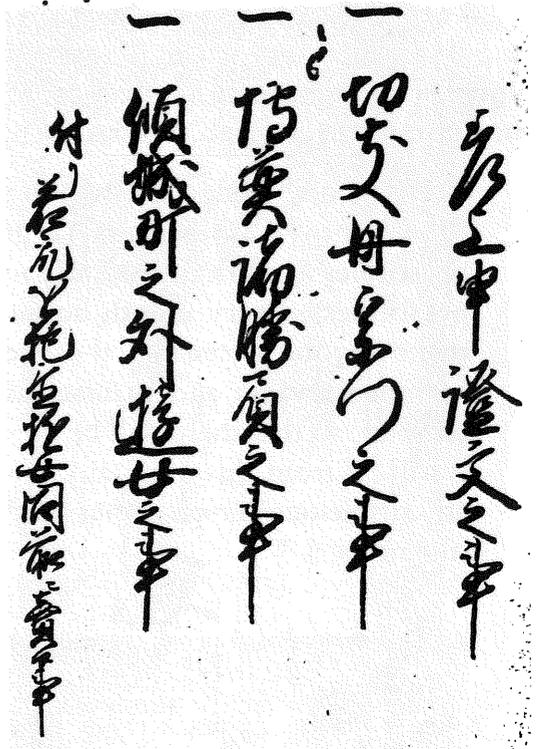
The document is signed by the elders of the ward, who pledge, "Should there be any deviation, those whose seals are affixed here will share responsibility for the misdeed."<sup>24</sup>

Like the village registers, the urban *ninbetsuchō* constitute bound volumes of durable mulberry paper. The dated title page is sometimes followed by a preface restating longstanding prohibitions. The Kikuyachō documents, for example, begin with this statement:

We hereby pledge to observe the firm laws issued heretofore concerning: (1) Christianity, (2) gambling games, (3) unregistered prostitutes (specifically, the sale and hire of young men and female prostitutes). Every month house owners (*iemochi*) will ascertain that everyone — tenants, those renting shops, and others including menservants and maidservants — possess certificates from temples, so that there will be no suspicious persons [living in the ward]. If from this point any member of the proscribed sect, or any suspicious person comes [to this ward], we will hastily report [the matter].<sup>25</sup>



2. Concluding page of Hanagurumachō register for 1819, affirming the ward's compliance with anti-Christian edicts. Kyoto Municipal Historical Archive.



3. Prefatory statement in *ninbetsuchō* for Kikuyachō, Osaka, 1764, indicating residents' adherence to laws against Christianity, gambling, and prostitution. In Miyamoto Mataji and Sakamoto Heiichirō, eds., *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūshi ninbetsuchō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972), vol. 2, p. 563.

After such preamble, all residents of the ward are listed underneath the name of their affiliate temples. Some registers specify the sect, preceded by the phrase “for many generations” (*dai-dai*); the temple of registration; and the temple of which the temple of registration is a branch. Some indicate alongside this information the province in which the resident was born.

Household heads are more often than not identified by a professional name, such as Tanbaya or Sakaiya, followed by the given names. Commoners normally did not bear surnames, and this professional appellation served in lieu of a family name. (The suffix “*ya*” [shop or dealer] does not necessarily imply that the head owns or rents a place of business.) If the head is a tenant (*shakuya* or *tanagari*), he (it is usually *he*) is listed as such and his landlord’s name is provided. Usually over 80 percent of ward residents rent their lodgings and shop space from property owners (*iemochi*).

After the household head’s name, the household members are listed; female names are almost always rendered phonetically in *kana* rather than in Chinese characters, and so stand out conspicuously. Family members are

followed by live-in employees. In some registers all of these members are conscientiously recorded as adherents of specific Buddhist sects, with affiliations to specific temples; in others, ditto marks indicate that all members of the household have routinely been registered as members of the master's sect and temple. In the latter case, temple registration appears to be a purely administrative affair, and has little to do with heartfelt religious convictions.

Some registers, such as the later records from Hanagurumachō, record ages alongside the entries for each member. Some provide notes (penned in or appended on strips of paper) concerning changes during the twelve months between compilations. Births, deaths, name changes, the hiring and dismissal of employees, instances of absconding, departures to other wards might be entered into the record in this fashion. There are normally only four or five persons listed per page, so ample space remains for such notations.

The *ninbetsuchō* for some wards are divided into sections according to status (house owners listed separately from tenants) or by religious affiliation. In such records, each section typically concludes with subtotals reflecting the number of male and female inhabitants. Sometimes figures for male and female servants (*genan* and *gejo*) are also provided. Some registers also indicate subtotals after each household.

Urban registers differ from the village *ninbetsuchō* in several significant ways. They document a far more complex occupational structure and degree of mobility. Compiled under more direct ruling-class supervision, they offer greater detail than the rural records. In the latter, for example, the spouse of the household head is typically listed simply as *tsuma* (wife); no personal name is logged. But the urban registers usually indicate the wife's name, and some note in detail such matters as the woman's new residence in the aftermath of divorce.<sup>26</sup> Whereas village *ninbetsuchō* often omit infants, especially females, the better urban registers not only list such babies, but also give their birth dates.

Students of village *ninbetsuchō* have investigated various problems relevant to women's history, such as fertility, nuptiality, incidence of divorce, female succession, and female migration for purposes of employment.<sup>27</sup> They have also used data on sex ratios, on the sex of last-born registered children, and on the spacing of births to demonstrate the likelihood of sex-specific infanticide, and its probable attenuation over time.<sup>28</sup> But let us turn

to the insights these sources provide into the lives of urban women during the Tokugawa period.

### THE UNBALANCED SEX RATIO

First of all, urban *ninbetsuchō* can shed light on the skewed sex ratio apparent in the cumulative figures cited above. Scholars who have studied village *ninbetsuchō* have attributed high sex ratios to the practice of sex-selective infanticide.<sup>29</sup> Was this also a major factor in producing the urban imbalance? Was abortion a factor? Peasant women often sought abortions to limit family growth, but this population-control technique is believed to have been more widely practiced in cities.<sup>30</sup> It was not, of course, sex selective in this society, which lacked amniocentesis and ultrasound machines, but it was more frequently employed by families that had already produced a son or two. So this practice might also result in high sex ratios.

The abandonment of children (*sutego*) was a significant problem for urban administrations. Was this a sex-selective phenomenon, and did the fate of the forsaken girls affect urban sex ratios?<sup>31</sup> Or did the larger male numbers result from a greater penchant on the part of male peasants to migrate to the cities for employment purposes (*dekasegi*)?

Figures derived from the Kikuyachō and Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō registers illuminate the cases of Osaka and Kyoto. The first Kikuyachō register, dated 1659, lists 189 ward residents. Only 84 of these are male, so the sex ratio is a low 80.0. Thereafter the population grows dramatically, peaking at 698 in 1716 before declining below 600 before the 1760s. After the first, all the registers show a sex ratio of over 114. The figure peaks at 146 in 1730, subsequently falling but remaining well above the national figure, which hovered between 110 and 106 during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

The sex ratio of Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō, a small ward with between 235 and 280 inhabitants during most of the period, was similarly unbalanced, at least during the first half of the Tokugawa era. But females seem to have outnumbered males, sometimes by a significant margin, during the last several decades of the period.

Some scholars have asserted that urbanization and the development of nonagricultural employment created more job opportunities for women, disinclined peasant families toward sex-selective population control, and

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consequently produced the declining nationwide sex ratio shown in the third column of table 2.<sup>33</sup> Might urban households have similarly overcome a bias against girl babies?

The *ninbetsuchō* suggest that this was indeed the case. One finds a fairly consistent feminization of family composition in both Kikuyachō and Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō. If we break down the figures given above into servant and nonservant categories, we realize that in Kikuyachō the sex ratio among the latter drops even more markedly than the national figures (table 3). The same applies to Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō (table 4).

Thus we find high sex ratios among family members up until the mid-

Table 2

SEX RATIOS AMONG KIKUYACHŌ AND SHIJŌ TACHIURI NAKA NO CHŌ RESIDENTS,  
COMPARED WITH THE NATIONAL SEX RATIO

YEAR	KIKUYACHŌ	SHIJŌ TACHIURI NAKA NO CHŌ	NATIONAL SEX RATIO	YEAR	KIKUYACHŌ	SHIJŌ TACHIURI NAKA NO CHŌ	NATIONAL SEX RATIO
1659	80.0	—	—	1790	105.9	—	—
1682	123.2	—	—	1800	112.3	—	—
1697	—	128.6	—	1804	110.1	—	—
1715	—	127.3	—	1808	91.1	—	—
1720	139.1	—	—	1810	134.9	—	—
1730	127.0	—	—	1820	139.2	—	—
1732	—	—	115.1	1822	109.3	—	—
1739	—	129.1	—	1828	—	—	108.6
1740	134.3	—	—	1830	114.6	—	—
1750	146.0	—	114.2	1840	121.1	—	—
1751	—	126.8	—	1845	—	89.0	—
1761	125.6	—	—	1846	—	—	106.1
1762	—	—	113.6	1850	119.1	—	—
1770	121.2	—	—	1860	115.5	—	—
1781	115.0	—	—	1861	—	100.8	—
1786	—	—	111.6				

SOURCES: Miyamoto Mataji and Sakamoto Heichirō, eds., *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972); Hayami Akira, "Kyōto machikata no shūmon aratamechō: Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō," Tokugawa rinseishi kenkyūjo, *Kenkyū kiyō* (1981), pp. 512–517.

*Table 3*  
SEX RATIOS AMONG KIKUYACHŌ RESIDENTS

YEAR	FAMILY MEMBERS	SERVANTS
1659	76.8	110.0
1682	109.2	196.6
1720	121.0	232.6
1730	112.6	263.0
1740	113.9	294.3
1750	119.4	261.9
1761	107.7	221.3
1770	101.6	188.1
1781	95.7	165.8
1790	91.2	189.7
1801	101.3	158.2
1810	106.1	218.6
1820	103.4	206.8
1830	100.0	158.3
1840	99.5	184.4
1850	97.8	183.0
1860	85.7	196.0

SOURCES: Miyamoto and Sakamoto, eds., *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō*; Hayami, "Kyōto machikata no shūmon aratamechō," pp. 512-517.

*Table 4*  
SEX RATIOS AMONG SHIJŌ TACHIURI NAKA NO  
CHŌ RESIDENTS

YEAR	FAMILY MEMBERS	SERVANTS
1697	119.1	145.9
1702	109.2	114.3
1703	106.2	172.7
1710	113.9	145.1
1711	122.1	132.0
1715	125.5	129.5
1737	123.9	148.7
1739	111.7	169.7
1743	114.7	139.5
1751	115.5	148.6
1808	88.0	104.3
1845	88.7	90.0
1861	87.8	200.0
1863	87.6	178.9

SOURCE: Hayami, "Kyōto machikata no shūmon aratamechō," pp. 512-517.

eighteenth century; these may have resulted from such practices as female infanticide, abandonment or inferior treatment of girls, or a hesitation to retain them in the household. But thereafter the ratio declines quite dramatically. The ratio of those listed as "sons" to those recorded as "daughters" remains high; in Kikuyachō in 1826, for example, it was 111.9. But this imbalance can be attributed to the departure of daughters as brides. The high figures shown in table 3 for Kikuyachō even during the latter half of the period reflect the preponderance of male servants and employees in the ward rather than male-biased family-planning practices.

But this raises another question. If peasants were raising more girls because of increasing employment opportunities, we would also expect to find an increase in the ratio of female to male employment, as Thomas Smith suggests (see servant sex ratio in table 3). One sees no obvious feminization, however, in the servant population, until one breaks employers down into two categories: house owners and tenants. Although the ratio of menservants (*genin*) to maidservants (*gejo*) remains high among both categories, it gradually falls in tenants' households (table 5).<sup>34</sup>

One finds a similar drop in the sex ratios of tenants' employees in the Dōshōmachi San-chōme, Hiranomachi Ni-chōme, and Kobikichō Minami no chō registers.<sup>35</sup> Tenants, if not house owners, were becoming increas-

Table 5  
SEX RATIOS OF SERVANTS, KIKUYACHŌ

YEAR	TENANTS' HOUSEHOLDS		HOUSE OWNERS' HOUSEHOLDS	
	NUMBER OF <i>GEJO</i>	SEX RATIO	NUMBER OF <i>GEJO</i>	SEX RATIO
1751	29	300.0	10	190.0
1766	17	211.8	27	200.0
1781	16	218.7	23	117.4
1800	34	197.0	19	142.1
1810	33	230.3	29	158.6
1841	41	182.9	23	169.6
1860	27	107.4	27	277.8

SOURCE: Inui Hiroimi, "Ōsaka chōnin shakai no kōzō: jinkō dōtai ni okeru," in Tsuda Hideo, *Kinsei kokka no kaitei to kindai* (Tokyo: Kōshobō, 1979), pp. 32-33.

ingly likely to employ women. In Kikuyachō the house owners were often merchants who maintained large staffs of clerks, who were usually male, whereas tenants were more apt to hire one or two people as household servants and attendants. I have argued elsewhere that such figures suggest that domestic chores were more and more being regarded as female chores, and that women were replacing men as domestic servants in Osaka.<sup>36</sup>

Such an analysis has yet to be done on Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō, but I have culled the data shown in table 6 from the Hanagurumachō *ninbetsuchō*. Although the sample from this small Nishijin ward cannot be considered statistically significant, it clearly suggests that females made up a larger proportion of tenants' servants than of house owners' employees. Tenants became increasingly apt to employ servants during the latter part of the period, so it is possible that an awareness of job opportunities in urban tenant households may have boosted the status of daughters and discouraged the practice of female-specific infanticide. Much more work needs to be done on this topic.

#### INHERITANCE AND HEADSHIP

Another topic relevant to women's status is inheritance. From a study of Tokugawa village *ninbetsuchō*, one scholar has found that around 9 percent

Table 6  
SEX RATIOS OF SERVANTS, HANAGURUMACHŌ

YEAR	TENANTS' HOUSEHOLDS		HOUSE OWNERS' HOUSEHOLDS	
	NUMBER OF <i>GEJO</i>	SEX RATIO	NUMBER OF <i>GEJO</i>	SEX RATIO
1819	8	87.5	3	233.3
1829	4	325.0	4	250.0
1839	8	37.5	8	200.0
1848	13	115.4	5	380.0
1858	4	25.0	20	120.0
1867	2	100.0	8	125.0

SOURCE: *Hanagurumachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō* (Kyōto-shi shiritsu rekishi shiryōkan).

of all successors to household headship were women.<sup>37</sup> But Nakano Yoshio has found only 37 cases of female succession out of 1,507 cases of succession in Osaka wards between 1707 and 1872.<sup>38</sup> These represent only 2.5 percent of all the cases examined. But the practice varied noticeably among urban commoner strata. Hauser has pointed out that 22 of the cases occurred in house-owner households, and that these represent 10.9 percent of all cases of house-owner succession. In contrast, only 1.1 percent of all tenants passed the household headship on to females.

Even so, as Hauser notes, female succession was not uncommon in Osaka even among tenants prior to 1730, when urban authorities discouraged it for reasons that remain unclear.<sup>39</sup> Hauser suggests that the practice was challenged to reduce competition among tradespeople, but his evidence is not persuasive. Now we need to look at data on succession from other cities to acquire greater insight into this problem.

The data from nearby Kyoto stand in sharp contrast to the Osaka figures. In Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō in 1808, six of sixty-four household heads (9.4%) were women. All of them rented their lodgings, and they constituted 9.5 percent of all tenants. In 1863, six out of sixty-nine household heads (8.7%) and 9.4 percent of all tenant household heads were women. In Hanagurumachō in 1819, six out of eighty household heads (7.5%) were women. Again, all rented their lodgings; they constituted 5.6 percent of all tenants. In none of these registers are females recorded as succeeding to the headship of house-owner households. So clearly inheritance practices varied from city to city, and perhaps even from ward to ward. We must examine more ward registers to clarify the constraints on female inheritance.

#### INDIRECT FEMALE HEADSHIP

Figures on female succession are in any case likely to be deceptive as measures of female control over households and property. Many men acquired their status as household head through their connections with women. This could happen in various ways:

1. The male could be adopted by a household head as a son-in-law (*muko yōshi*);
2. he could be appointed by a retiring household head from among the spouses or sons of female relatives;

3. he could marry the female heir of the former household head;
4. he could be adopted as son of the female heir; or
5. he could be appointed as successor (but not married or adopted) by the female heir.

In such cases, the man might be acutely aware of his debt to the woman through whom he had attained his position. The Osaka shop clerk Tokubei, in Chikamatsu Monzaemon's play *Sonezaki shinjū* (Love suicide at Sonezaki, 1703), refuses to marry his employer's niece precisely to avoid incurring such a debt. "If I took as my wife this young lady whom I've always treated with the utmost deference and accepted her dowry into the bargain, I'd spend my whole life dancing attendance on my wife. How could I ever assert myself?" he fumes.<sup>40</sup>

All men were not so reluctant. Of the 516 cases of succession recorded in the Kikuyachō registers between 1754 and 1865, 64 (12%) are of the types listed above. Thirteen (20%) of the 64 inheritors achieved their position via a connection with the former head's wife or widow. In 1 case the wife's younger brother is adopted while the husband is alive, but in the other 12 cases a male head is appointed after a husband's death. In 2 cases the wife remarries, and her new husband assumes the headship; in 4 cases, a male relative of the widow assumes the headship; and in 8 cases the woman adopts a son who becomes formal head of the household.

In nine cases (14%) the inheritor is the husband or adopted son of the predecessor's sister. Usually the inheritor succeeds while his predecessor is still alive; in only one case does he marry the sister of a deceased household head. In eight cases (13%) the inheritor acquires his position through a connection with his predecessor's daughter. In five cases he is adopted by his predecessor as son-in-law (*muko yoshi*), and in one he marries the daughter after her father's death. Another is adopted as a son by the late household head's daughter, and another is the nephew of the daughter.

In ten cases (16%) husbands or relations of the former head's aunt succeed him; in two (3%) a male with connections to the former head's grandmother succeeds him; and in one case, a cousin's husband takes over.

The most surprising thing about the Kikuyachō records of succession is the large number of men who acquire household headship through connections to the predecessor's mother. Fully twenty-one (33%) of all the cases fall into this category. Of these, fourteen are adopted sons of the mother, all but three of whom are adopted while the former head is still alive (gen-

erally listed as in retirement). Another is the nephew of the mother. In six cases the mother marries after her son's death or retirement, and her new husband becomes the household head.

The most representative form of female-mediated male succession, then, involved a man in the prime of life who surrendered his headship to an adopted brother selected by his mother. There are also cases of succession by "brothers" adopted by the male household heads themselves, but in the fourteen cases mentioned above the mother seems to make the choice. Perhaps these cases represent situations in which mothers, dissatisfied with the business performance of their sons, and out of concern for the survival of the household, shunted their natural sons aside in favor of men they considered more competent.

The following example of female-mediated succession is not atypical. In 1818 one Kawachiya Jirōkichi is listed in the Kikuyachō register along with his mother Mitsu and maidservant Tsuyu; they coresided with someone named Akashiya Sasuke, his wife, and four children. A note in the record dated "eleventh month" indicates that "Jirōkichi gave up his name and established a separate household as a tenant of Maruya Yohei in Mitsudera-chō. Moreover Risuke, of the household of Sanukiya Kihachi, a tenant of Hamamuraya Saijirō of Mitsuderachō, moved in [to Kikuyachō], becoming Mitsu's adopted son and assuming the name [Kawachiya]."<sup>41</sup> Another note mentions that Sasuke and family have moved with Jirōkichi to his new home. In the following year's register, Kawachiya Risuke is listed as the head, followed by "Mother: Mitsu" and the maid Tsuyu.

In only five of the twenty-one cases in which the former head is succeeded by a male having some connection to his mother has the former head died. In five cases the former head moves to a specified new address; one of these men is an adopted son whose relationship to his mother is dissolved (*rien*). In one case, the household head absconds; in another, he is listed as having been disowned as an adopted son. But in nine of the sixteen cases where the former head lives on after the appointment of a successor, he continues to coreside with his mother, a dependent of her chosen household head.

All of this, of course, conflicts with Confucian notions of female dependence on males, and specifically with the idea of mothers' submission to their sons on the death of their husbands. In Osaka society, widowed mothers seem to have exercised nearly as much control over succession and the future of the household as their adult sons.

## FAMILY COMPOSITION

Everyone, except for those who headed households themselves, is registered in these documents according to his or her relationship to the household head (table 7). The largest single category of women is wives, but the proportion of wives among female residents varies markedly from ward to ward. Two hundred and twenty-one females are listed as family members (as opposed to household heads or servants) in the Kikuyachō register of 1826. Of these, 77 (35%) are listed as wives of household heads. In the Hanagurumachō register for 1819, however, 50 of the 112 female family members (45%) are listed as the wives of household heads. In that ward, household heads apparently could not afford to support daughters, sisters, mothers, and additional female relations as well as their counterparts in the Osaka ward. Shiba Yakushichō, another Kyoto ward for which only the 1856 register survives, appears to have been somewhat better off than Hanagurumachō, judging from its greater ability to support female relations of the household head.

One striking thing about the composition of families in these wards is the low incidence of wives coresiding with their mothers-in-law. Of the 77 women listed as wives (of household heads) in the Kikuyachō register of 1826, only 12 (16%) live in the same household with their husband's mother. In addition, several other types of female in-law appear. A certain Iyoya Zenbei lives with his wife, mother-in-law, three daughters, and a

*Table 7*  
FEMALE FAMILY MEMBERS, IN RELATION TO HOUSEHOLD  
HEADS (IN PERCENT)

CITY	YEAR	WIFE	DAUGHTER	MOTHER	OTHER
Kikuyachō	1826	35	27	17	21
Shiba Yakushichō	1856	41	31	16	12
Hanagurumachō	1819	45	39	11	5

SOURCES: Miyamoto and Sakamoto, eds., *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō*, vol. 6, p. 121; *Shiba Yakushichō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō* (Kyōto-shi shiritsu rekishi shiryōkan); *Hanagurumachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō* (Kyōto-shi shiritsu rekishi shiryōkan).

male listed simply as “of the same household.” Curiously, Hinaya Kumakichi heads a household consisting of his elder brother, his sister-in-law, and their three children, as well as a younger brother, younger sister, mother, and maidservant. Another woman listed as a daughter-in-law (*yome*) resides with her husband and father-in-law, who heads the household.

In the 1819 Hanagurumachō register, only two of the fifty wives listed live with their mothers-in-law. Perhaps the coresidence of mothers-in-law with daughters occurred more frequently in the more affluent wards. In any event, coresidential mother-in-law–daughter-in-law relationships, which were so often described as oppressive in popular literature, seem to have been rather rare in the cities.

#### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

The occupational structure of cities was naturally far more complex than the occupational structure of villages. Unfortunately most urban *ninbetsuchō* do not specify the profession or employment of the household head. Commoners were generally forbidden to adopt surnames, but unlike most peasants, virtually all urban residents possessed designations, in lieu of such surnames, ending with the suffix *ya*. In some cases this shop name indicates a trade; Kamiya Chōbei, for example, would be Paper Shop Chōbei. But it is usually impossible to determine whether such a person was a paper maker or a paper dealer.

In any case, most households sport names that tell us nothing of their work. Names like Himejiya, Sakaiya, or Tanbaya refer to geographical locations. Usually they do not indicate the household head's birthplace; more often they refer to the origin of goods in which the household deals. Sometimes we can infer the household's occupation from its location, although we cannot assume that a household in Osaka's Kobikichō (“Sawyers' Ward”) consists of a sawyer's family, or that everyone in a Daikumachi (“Carpenters' Ward”) practices this calling.

Of course, this makes it impossible to ascertain the employment of many female household heads recorded in *ninbetsuchō*. The six listed in the Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō *ninbetsuchō* for 1808, mentioned above, have the names Hinoya Chiyo, Ōmiya Tome, Yamazakiya Saki, Daikokuya Kō, Fukushimaya Fushi, and Yamadaya Michi. All but Kō, whose shop name

refers to one of the gods of luck, bear names referring to geographical locations.<sup>42</sup> The Hanagurumachō list for 1819 includes female household heads Fushimiya Yae, Tanbaya Ishi, Izumiya Mie, Sakaiya Shige, Kashiwaya Yae, and Tsurugaya Tomi. All these names include geographical locations, and give no clue about the women's occupations.

The Hanagurumachō register for 1836 records a number of female household heads whose occupations we discover from a separate contemporary document.<sup>43</sup> The document lists recipients of official assistance during the Tenpō Famine. Seven of the nine women — Tanbaya Riki, thread maker; Jūniya Chika, thread shop worker; Funaya Taki, thread reeler for thread maker; Owariya Maki, thread reeler; Hishiya Yuki, thread reeler; Hishiya Kuma, thread reeler; and Kiya Sato, thread reeler — are involved in the production of silk thread. Another — Kashiwaya Mitsu — works as a laundress, and the last — Kawaguchiya Naka — is described as a day laborer (*hiyatoi*). In Naka's case, the suffix *ya* clearly means neither "shop" or "dealer." Sato's full name is Wood Shop Sato, but she apparently does not, in fact, deal in lumber.

Only a few scattered registers indicate occupations with clarity. A record of the inhabitants of Kasama, a small castle town on the Kantō plain, from the year 1705 has survived. Entitled *Kasama machikata kenbetsu kakiage* (Record of building frontage of Kasama residents), it is not a *ninbetsuchō* and contains no information about religious affiliation.<sup>44</sup> But it provides data on 1,841 people, including samurai, in 483 households. Thirty-seven (7.7%) of the households are headed by women, although in 22 cases the woman seems to have served in this capacity only because her husband was a samurai away on official duties. These women probably did not practice any trades. But in seven other cases, the woman's trade is specified: one sold *udon* noodles, and six worked as day laborers. All these working women apparently were the widows of commoners, their ages ranging from forty to sixty.

As noted above, the Kawaguchiya Naka who appears in the Hanagurumachō records was also a day laborer. She was forty-five years old when, listed as in that occupational category in the register, she received famine relief from the authorities. It seems to have been common for older, widowed women to earn their living through manual labor, but the urban *ninbetsuchō* alone do not provide evidence for this.

Women listed as household heads were usually single and apparently ei-

ther widowed or abandoned. This may indicate a near-absence of spinsters, as Laurel Cornell has noted in Tokugawa villages.<sup>45</sup> But to my knowledge no work has been done on this subject in connection with cities. Occasionally we find that these widowed women supported a child or two, but rarely could they afford to employ a servant. Hanagurumachō's Tanbaya Ishi headed a household of three daughters, a manservant, and a maidservant in 1819, but her case is an exception.

Just as it is usually impossible to determine the profession of the household heads, so the specific nature of the live-in female employees is also problematic. The term *gejo* ("low woman," "maidservant") could cover a variety of employee types. Even among domestic servants, there was a hierarchy among chambermaids (*koshimoto*), parlormmaids (*nakai*), and scullery maids (*meshitaki*), but all of these would be recorded simply as *gejo*. So would wet nurses (*uba*), nannies (*daki-uba*), and baby sitters (*komori*). In "pleasure wards," the prostitutes were recorded as *gejo*, whereas in Nishijin, hired weavers, thread reelers, and seamstresses were sometimes entered into the record under this all-embracing designation.

Many registers use other, equally vague designations. Nagasaki's Okeyamachi records often list certain male and female household members as *kanai*. In modern Japanese this is a term for wife, but here it seems to indicate a household servant of either sex, perhaps one of the lifetime or long-term variety of servants elsewhere called *fudai* or *hikan*. The Kasama register of 1705 lists female servants as *fudai* (lifetime, hereditary), *nenki* (long-term), or *ikki* (one-year) employees. This tells us nothing about what they did, but it at least indicates how long they were expected to do it. Seventy-two of the maidservants (69%) fall into the *nenki* category.

Some registers do not bother to define the position of some members at all. The register for Hiradomachi, 1633, lists many men and women without defining their status. One can speculate on their roles on the basis of the order in which they were recorded in each household entry, but many points remain unclear. There were 35 *gejo* and 4 wet nurses in this small community of 331 people, but there were also 27 women of unclear status.<sup>46</sup> Such problems naturally reduce the record's usefulness.

The Kikuyachō records also contain irritating ambiguities. Six females (as well as a number of males) in the 1826 register are recorded simply as "So-and-so of the same household (*dōka*)," one girl is described as "Toku, daughter of Riki of the same household," and there also appears one "Asa,



4. Nishijin weavers, from a sixteenth-century print. Kyoto General Historical Archive.

mother of Uno of the same household.” Perhaps these were *fudai*-type servants. Some Kyoto registers provide more detailed information about live-in employees. The Shiba Yakushichō record, for example, lists not only *gejo*, but *genan* (menservants), *genin* (servants), *tedai* (clerks), *deshi* (apprentices), and *komono* (shopboys). (The term *genin*, although gender neutral, in this register always describes men. The additional use of the term *genan* may indicate that *genan* were involved with household, rather than shop, duties.) Of the twenty-three female employees registered, ten are apprentices. Such women were eligible on completion of their training to join some textile guilds on an equal footing with males.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, the comparatively lengthy Hanagurumachō data series does not contain such

specific designations. The Koromonotana ward series does not list such categories as clerks and apprentices, but I have not found women listed in such roles. Further investigation of the latter series may produce insights into women's roles in Kyoto. Another category of female employee often specified in the registers is the *uba* or wet nurse. The Kikuyachō register for 1826 contains the names of three such women. It is apparent that the term could be applied to women whose charges had long since been weaned, but who were retained by the household as nannies. For example, Nurse Tami resides with one Sakaiya Onkichi, a boy of seven, while his guardian (*daihan*) Sakaiya Shūemon, resides in another ward. The nurse and Onkichi are the only two members of the household, and the boy is listed as its head.

The order in which the household members appear in these documents is quite standard. If the household head is married, his wife's name will surely be recorded next to his, but then come the children (sons in order of age, then daughters); siblings (brothers, then sisters); then parents and other relations. Finally, servants are recorded; first the males, then the females. Wet nurses, if present, end the household register. No doubt this reflects their low status; Tokugawa literature heaps scorn on the figure of the nurse. Both Ihara Saikaku and Chikamatsu quote the saying that "the three greatest scoundrels are packhorse drivers, ship's captains, and wet nurses."<sup>48</sup>

#### HOUSEHOLD RECORDS

With all their difficulties, the extant *ninbetsuchō* from urban wards of the Tokugawa period provide invaluable information concerning women's lives. Further research based on these documents should clarify our understanding of such matters as female employees' service tenures, the incidence of divorce and remarriage, postnatal maternal mortality, and the like. Particularly since the records are relatively easy for non-Japanese scholars to decipher and exploit, U.S. libraries with extensive Japan collections should make acquisition of microfilm copies of such documents a priority.

Insights gleaned from the *ninbetsuchō* can be enhanced by the use of household documents. These include *kakun* (household precepts), which specify appropriate behavior for men and women; women's diaries; and records of household management kept by women. Like the *ninbetsuchō*, these materials are scattered around Japan at public and private archives.



Such conglomerates as Sumitomo, Mitsui, and Kōnoike, the roots of which extend to the Tokugawa period, maintain corporate archives with records concerning male and female employees over several centuries. Hayashi Reiko has perhaps made the best use of such materials in connection with women's history.<sup>49</sup>

Space will permit discussion of only one text that I find especially illuminating. This is a notebook kept by the wife of a Numano Rokubei, who lived in Hashichō in the castle town of Wakayama during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Rokubei operated the Moriya Pawnshop, as had his ancestors from at least the 1590s, and served as a ward elder (*toshiyori*). From 1838 to 1858 his wife maintained the record on the employment of maidservants by this prosperous and prestigious household.

The contents of the book, which is in the possession of Mr. Numano Kiyoshi, have been published in volume five of the *Wakayama shi shi* (Wakayama city history).<sup>50</sup> The cover, bearing the title *Gejo kyūgin kashi hikae* (Maidservants' wage-advance notebook), is dated "seventh month, Tenpō 9" (1838). On the next page appears a series of figures indicating typical yearly wage levels (90, 80, 70 *monme* in silver). Next to each is a figure indicating a daily wage obviously calculated by dividing the yearly wage by 360. The daily wage for a servant contracted to work for 70 *monme*, for example, is given as 1 *mon* 9 *rin* 444. Clearly the woman maintaining this record was not only numerate; she aimed for precision in remunerating her employees.

A total of eighty-four female employees are listed in this record covering two decades. They are divided into four categories: *shinmyō* (apparently chambermaids who served as personal attendants to the record keeper), *na-kai* (parlormaids), *meshitaki* (scullery maids), and *mori* (nursemaids). Servants in the first category were hired at annual wages of from 110 to 130 *monme*; those in the second, from 100 to 120; those in the third, from 90 to 110 (with the exception of one young girl hired at 70 *monme*); and those in the fourth, from 75 to 110. Thus there was a clear hierarchy among the Numano household servants, with child-care providers at the bottom.

Alongside her careful account of wage payments, the Numano employer also listed occasional gifts, special tips, and seasonal bonuses for her maidservants. Sometimes the value of the gift is noted. In all, such nonwage forms of compensation seem to have been insignificant in comparison to the contracted wage.<sup>51</sup> The maidservants, although not wage laborers in the strict sense (i.e., workers whose labor power is productive and capital pos-

[17]	[16]	[15]	[14]	[13]	[12]	[11]	[10]
一 源	一 源	一 源	一 源	一 源	一 源	一 源	一 源
右 寺 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那	右 安 樂 院 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那	右 寺 旦 那
封 元	志 所	嘉 吉	源 次 郎	惣 吉	庄 吉	德 松	伊 之 助
一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断	一 同 宗 断
右 同 寺 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那	右 安 樂 院 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那	右 同 寺 旦 那
同 す て 未 十 一 才	下 女 志 け 未 廿 才	同 嘉 吉 未 十 二 才	同 源 次 郎 未 一 五 才	同 惣 吉 未 十 八 才	同 庄 吉 未 十 六 才	同 德 松 未 十 九 才	同 伊 之 助 未 廿 才

7. Sample entry from the Hanagurumachō register for 1856, with text printed in modern characters below (see the English translation on pages 78–79). The household of Daikokuya Risuke. Kyoto Municipal Historical Archive.

[1] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
大黒屋利助  
未六十一才

一代々真言宗  
生国山城  
上品蓮台寺中  
安楽院旦那  
大黒屋利助  
未六十一才

[2] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
妻  
ミト  
未五十一才

[3] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
利八

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
倅  
利八  
未廿六才

[4] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
娘  
むめ  
未廿二才

[5] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
孫  
伊之助  
未二才

[6] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
弟  
伊助  
未廿八才

[7] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一真言宗  
生国山城  
右安楽院旦那  
伊助  
妻 さく  
未廿七才

[8] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
右宗

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
同人  
鉄之助  
未四才

[9] 右宗  
右宗  
右宗  
善吉

一同断  
右同寺旦那  
下人  
善吉  
未廿六才

*English Translation of Ninbetsuchō Entry for Daikokuya Risuke Household*

- [1] Hereditary member of the Shingon sect  
Place of birth: Yamashiro  
Temple of registration: Anrakuin, Jōbon Rendaiji  
Daikokuya Risuke (seal), 61 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [2] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Wife Mito, 51 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [3] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Son Rihachi, 26 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [4] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Daughter Mume, 22 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [5] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Grandson Inosuke, 2 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [6] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Adopted] son [-in-law] Isuke, 28 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [7] Hereditary member of the Shingon sect  
Place of birth: Yamashiro  
Temple of registration: Anrakuin, Jōbon Rendaiji  
Wife of Isuke [Risuke's daughter] Saku, 27 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [8] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Son of same [Isuke], 4 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep

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- [9] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Zenkichi, 26 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [10] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Inosuke, 20 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [11] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Tokumatsu, 19 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [12] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Shōkichi, 16 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [13] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Sōkichi, 18 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [14] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
[Man]servant Genjirō, 15 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [15] Same faith and place of birth  
Temple of registration: Anrakuin, same as above  
[Man]servant Kakichi, 12 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [16] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Maid-servant Shige, 20 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
- [17] Same faith and place of birth  
Same temple of registration  
Maid-servant Sute, 11 years old [in this Year of the] Sheep
-

iting), were clearly functioning in an environment in which labor power had been substantially “commodified.”

Accordingly, the relationship between the employing household and these eighty-four women appears to have been more businesslike than intimate or affectionate. Occasionally the notebook records how a favored chambermaid was showered with gifts or married off to a promising male employee. More often, the document contains acerbic comments on the women’s actions or personalities. One chambermaid named Sawa was “extremely serviceable, but spiteful.” She was greedy and tormented the other servants; “everybody hated her.” Another maid cooked poorly and had an ill temper. Another had been misbehaving with a clerk of the household and found herself pregnant. A high proportion of dismissals were made on such grounds, and the average tenure of service was less than one year. In some cases, the women absconded before completion of their contracts.<sup>52</sup>

The Numano notebook thus offers invaluable glimpses into a world of household tension, petty rivalries, competition for favors, illicit liaisons, small crimes, and occasionally, genuine mistress-maidservant affinity. It also illuminates the role of the astute *ménagère* in upper-crust urban society in Tokugawa Japan. Further work with such sources will undoubtedly fertilize the already rich new field of Japanese women’s history.

## NOTES

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1. Joyce Chapman Lebra, “Women in an All-Male Industry: The Case of Sake Brewer Tatsu’uma Kiyō,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed.

Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 136–138.

2. Higuchi Kiyoyuki, *Nihon josei no seikatsushi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977), pp. 149–150.
3. On the vilification of women found in Mahayana texts, see Diana Y. Paul, *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahayana Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), esp. pp. 3–50, and John Stevens, *Lust for Enlightenment: Buddhism and Sex* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990), pp. 48–49, 104–105.

4. "The most significant feature of the final period of the feudal age, the Edo period . . . , is the literature of moral instruction for women." Joyce Ackroyd, "Women in Feudal Japan," *Transactions, Asiatic Society of Japan* (1959), pp. 52–53.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57; the *Lieh Tzu*, not a Confucian work, apparently takes this sentence from its *locus classicus* in the Confucian work on ritual, the *I-li*.
8. Hayashi Yoshikazu, *Jidai fūzoku kōshō jiten* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 1977), p. 645.
9. William Hauser, "Why So Few? Women Household Heads in Osaka Chōnin Families," *Journal of Family History* 11.4 (1986), pp. 34–51.
10. Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964–1965), pp. 33–35.
11. Irene Sege, "The Grim Mystery of the World's Missing Women," *Boston Globe*, February 3, 1992.
12. Susan B. Hanley and Kozo Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan, 1600–1868* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 210.
13. Thomas C. Smith, *Nakahara, Family Farming and Population in a Japanese Village, 1717–1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), p. 151.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
15. Saitō Osamu discusses the nature of this population and compares it with that of Ōsaka; *Shōka no sekai, uramise no sekai: Edo to Ōsaka no hikaku toshi-shi* (Tokyo: Riburopotto, 1987), pp. 91–116.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
17. Among scholars using village *ninbetsuchō* to explore various aspects of peasant women's lives, one should mention Hayami Akira, Mori Yasuhiko, and Itō Yoshikazu.
18. Among key works based largely on urban *ninbetsuchō*, see Akiyama Kunizō and Nakamura Ken, *Kyōto "chō" no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku, 1975); Hayami Akira, "Kyōto machikata no shūmon aratamechō: Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō," *Tokugawa rinseishi kenkyūjo, Kenkyū kiyō* (1981), pp. 514–515; Inui Hiromi, *Naniwa Ōsaka Kikuyachō* (Tokyo: Yanagiwara Shoten, 1977); Matsu-moto Shirō, *Nihon kinsei toshi ron* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku, 1983); Sasaki Yōichirō, "Edo jidai toshi jinkō iji nōryoku ni tsuite — Hida Takayama no keikenchi ni motozuku ichi jikken no kekka," in *Atarashii Edo jidai shizō o motomete*, ed. Shakai Keizai Shigakkai (Tokyo: Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, 1977), "Urban Migration and Fertility in Tokugawa Japan: The City of Takayama, 1773–1871," in *Family and Population in East Asian History*, ed. Susan B. Hanley and Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 133–153; Saitō, *Shōka no sekai*; Tsuchida Ryōichi, "Kinsei Kōfu Mikkamachi no jinkō dōtai," *Jinbun chiri*, no. 422 (June 1985).
19. Hauser, "Why So Few?"; Robert Smith, "The Domestic Cycle in Selected Commoner Families in Urban Japan, 1757–1858," *Journal of Family History* 3.3 (Fall 1978), pp. 219–235; and "Small Families, Small Households and Preindustrial Instability: Town and City in 'Pre-modern' Ja-

- pan," in *Household and Family in Past Time*, ed. Peter Laslett and Richard Wall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). L. L. Cornell, Susan S. Hanley, Thomas C. Smith, and others have made great use of village registers.
20. Gary P. Leupp, *Servants, Shophands, and Laborers in the Cities of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).
  21. Apparently. See Saitō Osamu, "Shōka hōkōnin to zatsugyōsha," *Keizai kenkyū* 36.3 (July 1985), p. 252.
  22. Although most such pleasure seekers were male, it was not unheard of for women to patronize male or female prostitutes in such areas. Examples occur in the fiction of Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), Ejima Kiseki (1667–1736), and many others.
  23. L. L. Cornell and Hayami Akira, "The Shūmon Aratame chō: Japan's Population Registers," *Journal of Family History* 11.4 (1986), pp. 311–328; Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change*, pp. 40–43; T. Smith, *Nakahara*, pp. 15–17.
  24. *Hanagurumachō monjo*, J-I, 1 (Kyōto shi rekishi shiryōkan, Kyoto).
  25. Miyamoto Mataji and Sakamoto Heichirō, eds., *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūmon ninbetsu aratamechō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972), vol. 2, p. 121.
  26. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 620.
  27. A short list of such works might include Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change*; Hanley, "Migration and Economic Change in Okayama during the Tokugawa Period," *Keiō Economic Studies* 10.2 (1973), pp. 19–36; T. Smith, *Nakahara*; and Hayami Akira, "Class Differences in Marriage and Fertility among Tokugawa Villagers in Mino Province," *Keiō Economic Studies* 17 (1980), pp. 1–16; "Labor Migration in a Pre-Industrial Society: A Study Tracing the Life Histories of the Inhabitants of a Village," *Keiō Economic Studies* 10.2 (1973), pp. 1–18; and "Thank You Francisco Xavier: An Essay in the Use of Micro-data for Historical Demography of Tokugawa Japan," *Keiō Economic Studies* 16.1–2 (1979), pp. 65–81.
  28. Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change*, pp. 233ff.; T. Smith, *Nakahara*, pp. 59–85.
  29. T. Smith, *Nakahara*, p. 63; Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change*, p. 234.
  30. T. Smith, *Nakahara*, p. 63.
  31. Research by Sugawara Ken'ichi suggests that this was *not* a factor. Among 106 cases of child abandonment he has studied in Kyoto between 1687 and 1744, he found 52 girls, 53 boys, and 1 whose sex was unrecorded. See "Kinsei Kyōto no chō to sutego," *Rekishi hyōron* no. 422 (June 1985), p. 47.
  32. Sekiyama Naotarō, cited in T. Smith, *Nakahara*, p. 149.
  33. T. Smith, *Nakahara*, p. 156.
  34. Inui Hiromi, "Ōsaka chōnin shakai no kōzō: jinkō dōtai ni okeru," in Tsuda Hideo, *Kinsei kokka no kaitei to kindai* (Tokyo: Kōshobo, 1979), pp. 32–33.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. Leupp, *Servants, Shophands, and Laborers*, pp. 62–64.
  37. L. L. Cornell, "Peasant Family and Inheritance in a Japanese Community,

- 1671–1980: An Anthropological Analysis of Population Registers” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1981), pp. 80, 176. Cited in Hauser, “Why So Few?”
38. Hauser, “Why So Few?” pp. 344–345.
39. Ibid., p. 346.
40. Donald Keene, trans., *Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 42.
41. Miyamoto and Sakamoto, *Ōsaka Kikuyachō shūmon ninbetsu aratemechō*, vol. 5, p. 428.
42. Hayami, “Kyōto machikata no shūmon aratemechō,” pp. 514–515.
43. *Nanjūnin shibun hikae* (Kyōto-shi rekishi shiryōkan).
44. See Hayashi Reiko et al., eds., *Ibaraki-ken shiryō, Kinsei shakai keizai ken* (Tokyo: Ibaraki-ken, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 133–173. I am grateful to Professor Hayashi for drawing this document to my attention.
45. Laurel L. Cornell, “Why Are There No Spinsters in Japan?” *Journal of Family History* 9.4 (1984), pp. 326–329.
46. Kyūshū shiryō sōsho, *Nagasaki Hiradomachi ninbetsuchō* (Nagasaki: Kyūshū shiryō kankō kai, 1955).
47. Yasukuni Ryōichi, “Kinsei Kyōto no shomin josei,” in *Nihon josei seikatsushi*, ed. Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai, vol. 3: Kinsei (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku, 1990), p. 95.
48. Ihara Saikaku, *Ihara Saikaku shū*, ed. Fujimura Tsukuru and Higashi Akimasa (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1977), vol. 3, p. 410; Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *Chikamatsu jōruri shū*, vol. 1, ed. Shigetomo Ki (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976), p. 96.
49. Hayashi Reiko, “Chōka josei no sonzai katei,” in *Nihon josei shi*, vol. 3, pp. 95–126; *Edodana bonka chō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1982), many others.
50. Wakayama shi shi hensan iinkai, eds., *Wakayama shi shi*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Wakayama-shi, 1975), pp. 173–198.
51. Leupp, *Servants, Shophands, and Laborers*, p. 103.
52. Ibid., pp. 87–88.

GLOSSARY

Akashiya Sasuke 明石屋佐助	dekasegi 出稼
Akiyama Kunizo 秋山国三	deshi 弟子
Asa あさ	dōka 同家
Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門	Dōshōmachi San-chōme 道修町三丁目
dai-dai 代代	Dōtonbori 道頓堀
daihan 代判	fudai 譜代
Daikokuya Kō 大黒屋かう	Fukushimaya Fushi 福島屋ふし
Daikumachi 大工町	fumie 踏絵
daki-uba 抱乳母	Funaya Taki 船屋たき

Fushimiya Yae 伏見屋やゑ	kana 仮名
gejo 下女	kanai 家内
<i>Gejo kyūgin kashi hikae</i> 下女給銀かし扣	Kantō 関東
genan 下男	Kasama 笠間
genin 下人	<i>Kasama machikata kenbetsu kakiage</i>
Gion 祇園	笠間町方軒別書上
Hamamuraya Seijirō 濱村屋清次郎	Kashiwaya Mitsu 柏屋みつ
Hanagurumachō 花車町	Kashiwaya Yae 柏屋やゑ
hara wa karimono 腹は借り物	Kawachiya Jirōkichi 河内屋次郎吉
Hashichō 橋丁	Kawaguchiya Naka 川口屋なか
Hayami Akira 速水融	Kikuyachō 菊屋町
Hayashi Reiko 林玲子	Kirishitan 切支丹
heinō bunri 兵農分離	Kiya Sato 木屋さと
hikan 被官	Kobikichō Minami no chō 木挽町南之丁
<i>Hime kagami</i> 姫鑑	komono 小者
Himejiya 姫路屋	komori 子守
Hinaya Kumakichi 雛屋熊吉	Kōnoike 鴻池
Hinoya Chiyo 日野屋ちよ	Koromonotana 衣棚
Hiranomachi Ni-chōme 平野町二丁目	koshimoto 腰元
Hishiya Kuma 菱屋くま	<i>Lieh tzu</i> 列子
Hishiya Yuki 菱屋ゆき	machikata 町方
hiyatōi 日雇	Maruya Yohei 丸屋与兵衛
iemochi 家持	Maruyama Ōkyō 丸山応挙
Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴	Masaoka Kanji 正岡寛司
ikki 一季	Matsumoto Shirō 松本四郎
Imai Shūhei 今井修平	meshitaki 飯炊
Inui Hiromi 乾宏巳	Miikedōri Go-chōme 御池道五丁目
Iyoya Zenbei 伊予屋善兵衛	Mitsu みつ
Izumiya Mie 和泉屋みゑ	Mitsuderachō 三寺町
Jūniya Chika 十二屋ちか	Mitsui 三井
Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒	Miyamoto Mataji 宮本又次
kakun 家訓	mon 文
Kamiya Chōbei 紙屋長兵衛	monme 匄
Kamo 加茂	mori 守

POPULATION REGISTERS IN JAPAN

Moriya 森屋  
 muko yōshi 婿養子  
 nakagai 仲買  
 nakai 仲居  
 Nakano Yoshio 中埜善雄  
 nenki 年季  
 ninbetsuchō 人別帳  
 Nishijin 西陣  
 Nobi 濃尾  
 Numano Kiyoshi 沼野清志  
 Numano Rokubei 沼野六兵衛  
 Okeyamachi 桶屋町  
 Ōmiya Tome 近江屋とめ  
 Onna Daigaku 女大学  
 Onna Kakun 女家訓  
 Owariya Maki 尾張屋まき  
 rien 離縁  
 Riki りき  
 rin 厘  
 Risuke 利助  
 Sadoyachō 佐渡屋町  
 Saitō Osamu 齋藤修  
 Sakaiya 界屋  
 Sakaiya Onkichi 界屋音吉  
 Sakaiya Shige 界屋しげ  
 Sakaiya Shūemon 界屋宗右衛門  
 Sanjū 三従  
 Sanukiya Kihachi 讃岐屋喜八  
 Sasaki Yōichirō 佐佐木陽一郎  
 Sawa さわ  
 Senba 船場  
 shakuya 借屋  
 Shiba Yakushichō 芝薬師町

Shijō Tachiuri Naka no chō  
 四条立売中之町  
 Shinbashi 新橋  
 Shinmachi 新町  
 shinmyō 針妙  
 shū aratame chō 宗改帳  
 Sonezaki shinjū 曾根崎心中  
 Sugimori Tetsuya 杉森哲也  
 Sumitomo 住友  
 sutego 捨子  
 Tami たみ  
 tanagari 店借  
 Tanbaya 丹波屋  
 Tanbaya Ishi 丹波屋いし  
 Tanbaya Riki 丹波屋りき  
 tedai 手代  
 Tenpō 天保  
 Toku とく  
 Tokubei とくべい  
 toshiyori 年寄  
 Tsuchida Ryōichi 土田良一  
 tsuma 妻  
 Tsurugaya Tomi 敦賀屋とみ  
 Tsuyu つゆ  
 uba 乳母  
 udon 饅飩  
 Uno うの  
 Wakayama 和歌山  
 Wakayama shi shi 和歌山市史  
 ya 屋  
 Yamadaya Michi 山田屋みち  
 Yamazakiya Saki 山崎屋さき  
 yome 嫁