

Family Bonding in the Lives of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Gender-Variant Individuals

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Presentation Topic

Analysis of cases of 3 real life persons and 1 fictional character raised by parents as opposite gender and how they bonded with parents and spouses

Persons and character are:

- Inuzuka Shino, fictional character from *Nansō Satomi Hakkenden* (1814-1842) by Kyokutei Bakin
- Ooto (born c. 1854 in Sanuki province, Shikoku island), life reported in *Tokyo nichu nichu shinbun* 813/1874 and “brocade image” (*nishiki-e*)
- Nakajirō (c. 1860-1883, native of Edo/Tokyo) and Okame (born c. 1863, native of Susukimura village, Chichibu district, in Saitama prefecture), lives recounted in *Yomiuri shinbun* 13-15/06/1884

Raised by parents as opposite gender following
childrearing technique *torikae kosodate*

Name coined by scholar Mitsuhashi Junko, meaning:

- "Childrearing" (*kosodate*)
- "Exchange" (*torikae*), allusion to twelfth-century court tale *Torikaebaya*

Shino, biologically male character, is raised as girl by mother Tatsuka

We will see:

- Gendered rites of passage
- Daily training by father Bansaku
- How Shino cares for Tatsuka during long illness
- Characters' emotions on linguistic and physical levels

Ooto, anatomically male individual, was raised by parents as girl

Ooto's parents taught her how to sew and dress according to seasons and weather, feminine tasks

At 18 *sai*, she found work as seamstress and during seasonal market met Hayazō, who fell in love

Ooto and Hayazō married and registered marriage on *koseki* reporting Ooto as biologically female

City Hall employees declared marriage null, had Ooto cut hair short to signal anatomically male

We will see:

- Love story between Ooto and Hayazō
- *Nishiki-e* showing Ooto, Hayazō, and cat during shared domestic activity of mending garment
- Subjects' emotions on linguistic and physical levels

Nakajirō was biologically female individual raised as male by parents

Okame was biologically male individual raised as female by parents

Met in 1881 during yearly spring pilgrimage to statue of Iwadono Kannon, Saitama prefecture

Nakajirō fell in love with Okame and searched for her, met with her parents and asked to marry her

We will see:

- Gendered ways Nakajirō and Okame went on pilgrimage
- Love story between Nakajirō and Okame
- Intimacy between parents and future spouses
- Subjects' emotions on linguistic and physical levels

The Practice for Parents to Raise Children as Opposite Gender

Parents brought up children as opposite gender because they feared children would die in infancy

By rearing children as opposite gender, parents followed folklore practice suggesting children would receive gods' protection

Custom practised in nineteenth and early twentieth century, when it fell out of use because importation of Western childrearing techniques

Contribution to State of Art

Gregory Pflugfelder and Mitsuhashi Junko have studied *torikae kosodate* practice by focusing on:

- Religious motivations behind custom
- Cross-dressing and naming as gendering practices
- Prohibition against male-male relationships in early Meiji in connection with Ooto's marriage annulment

Aim of presentation:

- To examine under-researched aspect of phenomenon: lived experiences of subjects and how they bonded with parents and spouses through rites of passage, shared everyday activities, and seasonal celebrations

Methodology

Reference disciplines:

- Cultural history:

Semiotic concept of culture by Clifford Geertz,
shared web of meanings

Cultural Analysis: reconstruction of shared web of
meanings

- Emotion history:

Aims to understand meanings attributed to feelings

Method:

- Life history: analysis of life of individual as story, narration where events of person told in chronological and causal order, to understand how aspect of life was shaped by historical, cultural, social etc. context

Focus on how subjects socialised into and performed genders

Cases selected through purposeful sampling: cases containing most pertinent material on *torikae kosodate*

Notes on Important Terms

On *torikae kosodate*:

- Primary sources do not use specific term for practice

Torikae kosodate proposed by Mitsuhashi, used for simplicity's sake

On gender-variant:

- Used to make topic clear to modern audience

adjective did not exist

not used in primary sources

primary sources, *Yomiuri shinbun* in regards to Okame and Bakin in *Tōen shōsetsu* (1825), employ *otoko-onna*

otoko-onna comes from Edo/Tokyo dialect, used from early eighteenth century to mid-twentieth century

indicates biological males who took on lifeways of females and biological females who took on lifeways of males

On pronouns:

- He/him for Shino, character identifies as man
- For remaining subjects, pronouns appropriate for their genders:

He/him for Nakajirō

She/her for Ooto and Okame

Case 1: Shino

Rites of Passage in Tokugawa Japan

Children and adolescents underwent rites of passage that marked progression from childhood to adulthood through attribution of name(s) and sartorial and tonsorial practices

Rites differed according to status and gender

For male and female children: *kamioki* "hair placing,"
2/3 *sai*: child's hair let grow and received
gender-specific clothes

Rite performed 3 times with gender-specific clothes and hairstyles at 3, 5, and 7 *sai* (*shichigosan*)

From 7 to 13 *sai*, boys and girls began schooling and were taught by parents and instructors different gendered skills;

For boys:

10/12 *sai*: "wearing of pleated trousers" (*hakamagi*), boy received first pair of *hakama*; rite exclusive to nobles and warriors

11/12 *sai*: crown of boy's head shaved, hairstyle drew attention to "forelocks" (*maegami*); boy combed back hair in "topknot" (*chonmage*)

14/15 *sai*: hair on temples shaved into right angles, "putting in corners" (*kado wo ireru*)

16/17 *sai*: coming of age ritual: "wearing of [adult] clothes" (*genpuku*): man received hat/helmet, gifts, pate of hair shaved (*sakayaki*), new name

For girls:

Coming of age ritual: "stopping sleeves" (*sodetome*), coincided with first marriage: woman had sleeves shortened, blackened teeth, removed eyebrows then repainted with makeup; woman did not receive new name, kept hers since childhood

Rites of Passage in Shino's Life

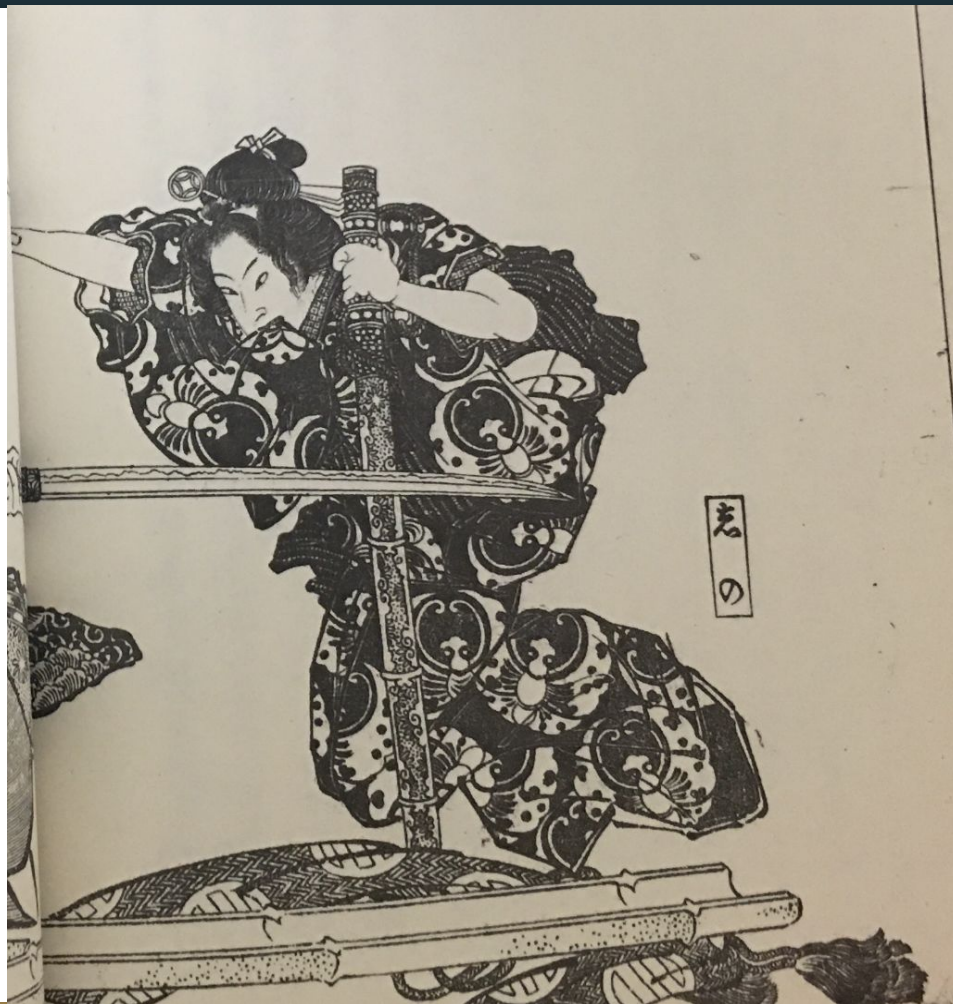
Shino undergoes age-related rites of passage:

- At 3 or 4 *sai*, Tatsuka lets Shino's hair grow, ties hair up with "hairpins" (*kansashi*) and dresses him in "feminine clothes" (*onnafuku*)

Illustrations show Shino wears feminine hairstyles and clothes throughout childhood and early adolescence



Source: Hamada, 2003b



Source: Hamada, 2003b



Source: Hamada, 2003a

From 11 or 12 *sai* to 14 or 15 *sai*, Shino is not wearing *hakama*, crown of hair is not shaved, he does not have topknot

He has feminine appearance

- At 14 or 15 *sai*, by own volition and following Bansaku's will, Shino undergoes *genpuku* and takes masculine appearance: he takes off "feminine clothes" (*onnakinu*), cuts hair on temples, receives sword from Bansaku, takes adult name Moritaka



Source: Hamada, 2003a

Shino has crown of hair shaved and topknot



Source: Hamada, 2003a

Shino has top of head shaved (*sakayaki*)

Shino undergoes childhood rites of passage appropriate for girl at mother's wish and coming of age ritual appropriate for man by own will and father's wish

Everyday Training

At 11 or 12 *sai*, Shino begins schooling under Bansaku, who runs local school for sons of warrior families

Bansaku trains him:

- At day, teaches Shino calligraphy and reading and punctuating Confucian texts and martial treatises in *kanbun*
- At night, teaches Shino sword fighting

Training regime follows twin path of martial arts and letters, ideal pursued by men of warrior class

Training Shino undergoes is male gendered
For his proclivity towards martial arts, Bansaku feels
“deep affection” (*shōai*) for Shino

Caring for Sick Mother

When Shino is 11 or 12 *sai*, Tatsuka falls ill

Shino carries out tasks to help her recover:

- Goes to physician, prepares medicines
- Gives her massages, tells her stories

Tatsuka shows affection by “caressing” (*nadete*) Shino

Shino serves as paragon of “filial piety” (*kōshin*)

Tatsuka and Bansaku feel “compassion” (*jiai*), Buddhist term for emotion of buddhas and bodhisattva in helping sentient beings to salvation

Case 2: Ooto Illustrating Domestic Activities

Source:

*Tokyo nichichi
shinbun* 813/1874
in Tomizawa, 2008



Case 3: Nakajirō and Okame

Gendered Ways to Go on Pilgrimage and Fall in Love

Nakajirō and Okame met in 1881 during pilgrimage to Iwadono Kannon in Shōbōji Temple, Saitama prefecture

Pilgrimage every year on 18th day of 3rd month

Okame native of Saitama province, lived in nearby village Susukimura

Okame prayed at statue with young girl of 7 or 8 *sai*
Inappropriate for women to travel alone, asked
relatives/neighbours for young girl(s) to accompany
them

Okame behaved as customary for women of era:

- Went on pilgrimage with young girl
- Travelled short distance; women rarely embarked on
journeys to distant places

Nakajirō was native of Tokyo and travelled to Saitama
on his own. Travelling on his own over long distance
was appropriate for men

Nakajirō fell in “love” (*koi*) with Okame at first sight
Articles employ main elements of this trope as found in court literature:

- Nakajirō and Okame are brought together by Kannon's will
- Pilgrimage location where they fortuitously meet
- Nakajirō is smitten by Okame's beauty and grace
- Nakajirō continues to see Okame's “image” (*omokage*)
- Asks villagers who she is
- Goes to her house, meets with her parents
- Marry and have child

The scene Nakajirō talks with Okame's parents is intimate and moving:

- Okame's father shares with Nakajirō Okame's life story, Nakajirō shares his
- They speak over cups of tea and sweets
- Okame's father "caresses" (*nadete*) her

Conclusion

We have studied *torikae kosodate* practice, childrearing technique adopted in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan

Parents who feared their children would die in infancy would raise their children as opposite gender so that gods may protect them

Pflugfelder and Mitsuhashi have studied this custom for:

- Religious motivations
- Gendering practice
- Connection with early-Meiji state-sanctioned homophobia

We have examined how sample of 4 individuals bonded with parents and spouses through rites of passage, seasonal celebrations, and shared everyday activities

Parents-children relationships:

- Parents decided children's childhood rites of passage, parents and children co-decided children's adulthood rites of passage
- Shared everyday activities:
Teaching of gendered skills
Sickcare
- Through intimate conversations about life stories and physical gestures (caressing and massaging)

- On linguistic level, love parents felt towards their children is “deep affection” (*shōai*) and “compassion” (*jiai*)

ai specialised in expressing parental love

filial love expressed by “filial piety” (*kōshin*)

Relationships between spouses:

- Narratives of love at first sight
- Seasonal celebrations serve as locations where subjects fortuitously meet
- Shared activities:
 - Conversations around life stories
 - Everyday domestic tasks
 - Sharing activities establishes and expresses affection between spouses on physical level
- On linguistic level, romantic love expressed by *koi*

Subjects bonded with parents and spouses through rites of passage, shared everyday activities, and seasonal celebrations, which inspired parental affection and romantic love

It has been important to explain ways and reasons why individuals did not align gender performances to anatomical sexes

However, this aspect of their lives apparently did not alter their capacity to bond with families

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Thank you for listening

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