Prejudice and nationalization

On the 'buraku' problem, 1868-1912

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Abstract

Through a consideration of the changing social circumstances of ‘former outcasts’, ‘new commoners’, and ‘burakumin’ in Meiji-period Japan, this thesis explores the unfolding of processes of nationalization at a ‘popular’ level.

It begins with a look at how formerly unremarkable customary practices involving the avoidance and denigration of certain ‘outcast’ status people were repositioned as illegitimate expressions of ‘discrimination’ in the wake of the abolition of ‘outcast’ status groups and the establishment of equality between Japanese subjects before the law. It goes on to detail how by their attribution of such stigma as ‘foreign ancestry’ and sundry biological and moral ‘defects’ to those who were subjected to discriminatory treatment, scholarly and official attempts to explain ‘social discrimination’ against a part of the Japanese population re-invigorated those ‘discriminatory’ practices.

It follows with an examination of proposals that such people emigrate, looking at arguments by Meiji-period elites that through migration to the colonies or as contract labourers, ‘new commoners’ might not only better themselves, but more significantly, make valuable contributions to national development and progress, and so establish their credentials as ‘true nationals’. Moving to look in more detail at the relations of those on the social margins to such ‘national’ ideas, it then takes up the performance of national service, tracing the establishment and propagation of the notion that the accumulation of ‘national capital’ through patriotic action was a practical means of improving one’s social circumstances.

Lastly, it looks at reform and improvement campaigns. Considering how such programs unfolded both in urban areas and in rural communities, the thesis ends with an analysis of how people sought to render their communities as model districts and villages, and themselves as model Japanese subjects, in the aim of averting social prejudices, and of improving their own lives.
Statement of originality

I, the undersigned, Noah Yoshinaga McCormack, declare that this thesis is my own original work; where the work of others is used, I have acknowledged accordingly throughout.

[Signature]

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II
Acknowledgements

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Early versions of chapters four and six have benefited from the insights of anonymous reviewers for East Asian History and Japanese Studies respectively, while other sections have been refined by the comments of Jinki Trevillian and Deborah Hodgson.

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Kyoto city population and metropolitan area, 1871-1918 250.
Source abbreviations (full details in bibliography)

BMBSS  Buraku mondai bungei sakuhin senshū (50 vols.).

KBSS  Harada Tomohiko et al. (series eds.), Kindai burakushi shiryō shūsei (10 vols.).

KNBS:  Kyoto Burakushi Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kyoto no burakushi (10 vols.).

MKBS:  Mie Ken Kōseikai (ed.), Mie ken buraku shiryōshū, kindai hen.

NSSS: 14  Harada Tomohiko et al. (eds), Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei, vol. 14, Buraku.


SBMR:  Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.), Sengo buraku mondai ronshū (6 vols.).

SHYH  Okiura Kazuteru (ed.), Shisō no umi he, vol. 18, Suihei= hito no yo ni hikari are.
Notes

Japanese names are in Japanese order with family names first. For those with Japanese names who write in English, the order has been reversed when referring to their English language work.

Japanese dates prior to December 1872 that are according to the lunar calendar are recorded as, for example, 01/03/1872. By way of comparison, dates in the Gregorian calendar are written as, for example, 01 March 1872.

Availing myself of currently available technology, and perceiving romanization to be of limited utility to anyone without Japanese language abilities (in which case romanization is unnecessary), I have limited romanization in the footnotes to author’s names and titles. The bibliography dispenses with that convention altogether.

All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated; any emphases in citations are original.
Chapter one

An introduction to the ‘buraku’ problem

Formal equality and the nation

In 1871, the Council of State (Dajōkan 大政官) governing Japan abolished the so-called ‘outcast status groups’ (senmin mibun 賤民身分), and ordered that people classed within them be registered as commoners (heimin 平民).1 During the early 1870s, the new government also emancipated prostitutes, allowed freedom of occupation and residence, permitted intermarriage between commoners and nobles, and instituted equality of the social classes before the law.2 One practical result of such measures was that, with a range of exceptions, ‘anything that was legally permissible or obligatory for one was permissible or obligatory for all’.3 Given that legislation had previously divided the population

1 Dajokan fukoku 大政官布告, 28/8/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 59.
2 These social ‘classes’ comprised officials, nobility, the former military classes, and commoners (kanin kashizoku heimin 官民華士族平民). Shihōshō tatsu 司法省達, 10/10/1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 11.
into occupation-based status groups whose members enjoyed different ‘rights’, these steps to establish legal equality between social classes were unprecedented.\(^4\)

In many ways, such measures resulted from radical alterations in government strategy that began in the mid-nineteenth century, when representatives of Western powers transmitted demands for commercial and diplomatic relations to the Tokugawa Bakufu (幕府), or military government. Forced to capitulate in the face of Western military and technological superiority, and therefore compelled to abandon the longstanding restrictions on contact with the outside world (sakoku 鎖国),\(^5\) Bakufu and domainal officials perceived change to be inevitable. Ensuing political upheavals concerning the substance and agents of change led to civil war, and to the rise in 1868 of a new regime that became known as the Meiji (明治, literally ‘enlightened rule’) government, after the era name taken by the monarch, Mutsuhito (睦仁).\(^6\)

The new government aimed to secure the independence of the Japanese state in the face of continuing European and American political and economic pressures, and to build a basis upon which to call for the revision of the so-called ‘unequal treaties’ (fubyōdō jōyaku 不平等条約) concluded in 1858.\(^7\) Towards

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4 It must be noted that in the Tokugawa system, ‘Rule by status assured an equality of treatment under law appropriate to the status of each individual’, or that members of the same status group were equal. John W. Hall. ‘Rule by status in Tokugawa Japan’, Journal of Japanese Studies, vol. 1, no. 1, Autumn 1974, p. 45.

5 The Tokugawa Bakufu restricted foreign trade and relations from the early-seventeenth century with an eye to repressing Christianity in particular and social unrest more generally. Restrictions were tightened from the late-eighteenth century into the early-nineteenth century.

6 Mutsuhito (1852-1912) reigned from 1867 to 1912.

7 Concluded first with the US, and then with British, Dutch, Russian and French diplomatic representatives, these treaties granted foreign nationals consular jurisdiction or extraterritoriality,
these ends, and noting that only ‘advanced’ or ‘civilized’ states were recognized as rightful subjects of international law in the prevailing interstate system, government officials commenced efforts to ‘modernize’ the country. \(^8\) This involved selectively appropriating Western institutions and ideas in the hope of equaling the level of development of the ‘advanced’ Western states. \(^9\) Consequently, such unambiguous signs of ‘enlightened civilization’ as legal equality between Japanese subjects and the abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups figured prominently among early government initiatives.

Apart from helping to establish the Japanese state’s civilized credentials, the legislation of equality provided a basis for constructing a Japanese nation-state. The mid-to-late-nineteenth century was a time when the ‘advanced’ states were engaged in re-organizing their populations into unified ‘national’ societies. \(^10\) That is, they were constructing what Benedict Anderson has

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\(^8\) See Nishikawa Nagao 西川長夫, ‘Nihongata kokumin kokka no keisei—hakkushiteki kantai' 『日本型国民国家の形成—比較史的観点から』, in Nishikawa Nagao and Matsumiya Hideharu (eds.) 西川長夫・松宮秀治編, Bakumatsu / Meiji no kokumin kokka keisei to bunka hen'yō 『幕末・明治期の国民国家形成と文化変容』(東京: 新曜社, 1995), pp. 28-29. Mid-nineteenth-century international law was introduced into Japan via Henry Wheaton’s Elements of international law. Published in English in 1838, and then in French (1848), and Chinese (1863), the Chinese translation was adapted into Japanese in 1865, and it circulated widely. The eclectic school of law that Wheaton followed was the most influential of the time. It held that Western countries were the principal subjects of the civilized Euro-American invention that was international law, under which they might acquire foreign territory by treaty, invasion, discovery or settlement. Japan was recognized as a state by the foreign treaties signed at the end of the Edo period, but only as an unequal because not yet fully civilized one. See Inoue Masao 井上勝生, ‘Bankoku Köhō‘ 『万国公法』, and ‘Kaidai’ 『解題』, in Tanaka Akira (ed.) 田中彰編, Nihon kindai shisō taikei, vol. 1, Kaikoku 『日本近代思想大系 第１巻 開国』(東京: 岩波書店, 1991), pp. 474-481, and p. 38 respectively. In English, see, for example, Marlene Mayo, ‘Rationality in the Meiji Restoration. The Iwakura embassy’, in Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian (eds.), Modern Japanese leadership. Transition and change (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1966), pp. 335-337.

\(^9\) Competitive participation in a single world-economy, as Nishikawa points out, forces states to imitate each other’s more successful features. Nishikawa Nagao 西川長夫, Kokumin kokka ron no statei 『国民国家論の射程』(東京: 柏書房, 1998), p. 35.

\(^10\) The trend towards unification was most visible in post-Franco-Prussian war Germany, the post-Civil War United States, Garibaldi’s Italy, Third Republic France. See Nagata Toyoomi 長田豊
described as ‘imagined political communities’, consisting of people who consider themselves united by qualities such as shared rights and duties, culture, history, language, ancestry and a future centred on what they perceive to be their own state.\textsuperscript{11} In practice, the national unification of people has tended to rely upon the introduction of some form of popular equality, which provides both a concrete as well as a symbolic foundation for the notion that the population has a common stake in ‘their’ state. In the Japanese instance, these processes began with legislative measures such as those mentioned above, along with such slogans as ‘equality of the four peoples’ (shimin byōdō 四民平等).\textsuperscript{12}

This thesis examines the situation of people formerly of ‘outcast’ status who, despite nominally benefiting from the establishment of legal equality, found their situation in Meiji Japan less than satisfactory. However, it does so from the perspective that the existence of marginalized groups within national communities is not an aberration, but is, rather, integral to such formations. To be precise, I take the view that, apart from being founded on the symbolic basis of equality, national communities cannot do without ‘others’.

It is somewhat banal nowadays to observe that group formation entails the delineation of group boundaries, and consequently involves the determination of those who are to be excluded from the group. In the words of Michel de Certeau, ‘every society defines itself by what it excludes. It constitutes itself through differentiation. To create a group is to create outsiders. A bipolar


\textsuperscript{12} This refers to legal equality between former peasants, artisans/craftspeople, merchants, and the military classes.
structure, essential to every society, establishes an “outside” in order that a “within” [entre nous] exist; frontiers, that an interior country take shape; “others”, that a “we” come into being.13

In the modern world-system, internationally recognized boundaries mark out foreign lands and foreigners as legitimate objects of differentiation and discrimination.14 Through discursive representation as defective ‘types’ whose existences are reducible to the sum of particular attributes,15 ‘internal others’—frequently including ‘immigrants’, ‘sexual deviants’ and the ‘insane’—are likewise determined to be valid objects of special treatment. Identification of such ‘others’ assists in the creation of a sense of ‘togetherness’ among those who are passed over by the processes of ‘othering’ (and simultaneously stimulates action to rectify their ‘faults’ among the stigmatised).16

This is to say that national populations come to think of members sharing certain characteristics and dispositions through encounters with certain types of ‘others’ who, because of stereotyped characteristics attributed to them, do not ‘belong’. As Etienne Balibar has written, the qualities that ‘true nationals’ ought to share are ‘inferred (and [...] ensured) a contrario by the allegedly quasi-

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16 Through positive identification processes—‘this is what we are, therefore this is what I am’, and negative ones—‘this is alien to me, therefore I reject it’... Julia Kristeva, Lettre ouverte à Harlem Désir (Paris: Rivages, 1990), pp. 18-19.
hallucinatory visibility of the "false nationals", with the result that there is constant concern with identifying such 'false nationals'.

It is with such thoughts in mind that I here examine the situation of people formerly of 'outcast' status who were labelled 'new commoners' and 'burakumin' and subjected to popular denigration during the Meiji period. A practice initially founded on custom and law, although their exclusion from 'regular' social intercourse was rendered problematic by the introduction of legal equality, it was rationalized through claims that they possessed negative attributes including foreign ancestry and a range of physical and moral defects. I explore how they were represented as 'fitting' targets of prejudice, and go on to look at how those processes led to anti-discriminatory tactics and strategies that often revolved around the accumulation of 'national capital'.

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19 The term 'new commoner' forms an obvious pairing with the term 'former native' (kyūdojin 旧士人) that was applied to the Ainu people. See Kawamura Minato 川村満, 'Taishū orientarizumu to Ajia ninnshiki' 「大衆オリエンタリズムとアジア認識」, in Ō Shinobu et al. (eds.) 大江志乃夫ほか編, Iwanami köza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi, vol. 7, Bunka no naka no shokuminchi 『岩波講座近代日本と植民地 第7巻 文化のなかの植民地』 (東京: 岩波書店, 1993), p. 128. See also Murai Osamu 村井義, 'Shokuminchishugi to kindai Nihon—'Nantō ideorogi no hassei wo shuppatsu ni ni「植民地主義と近代日本—『南太平洋の発生』を出発点に」. Hihyō Kūkan 『批評空間』, vol. 7, July 1992 (discussion with Yamaguchi Masao, Karatani Kōjin, and Kawamura Minato), p. 37. The significance of these labels, needless to say, resided in the fact that they solicited persistent quests for the 'differences' implied by those specific appellations to distinguish members of those groups. See Murai Osamu 村井義, 'Teikoku no katari 「帝国の語り」, Gendai Shisō 『現代思想』, vol. 22, no. 9, August 1994, p. 93.
20 A notion borrowed from Ghassan Hage, White nation—fantasies of White supremacy in a multicultural society (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), p. 53. In formulating this approach, I have rather loosely adapted Tomiyama's argument about the determination of 'Okinawans' as 'lazy', 'dirty', 'ignorant', 'immoral' and so forth implying the existence of a corps of model 'Japanese' who were 'hygienic', 'rational', 'hardworking', and generally progressive. Identified as lacking in the processes that helped produce 'true nationals', Okinawans adopted anti-discriminatory tactics aimed at eliminating their 'defects'. As those defects were defined in opposition to the virtues of 'true nationals' who were Japanese, their tactics of self-improvement tended to involve the acquisition of characteristics represented as proper to their more advanced fellow imperial subjects in the home islands (naichi 内地). Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, Kindai Nihon shakai to
It is desirable to explain some of the central terms used in this work. The term ‘buraku’ (部落) as it is used here derives from ‘tokushu buraku’ (特殊 [特殊] 部落), which means ‘special settlement’. The ‘buraku’ problem (buraku mondai 部落問題) denotes the complex of social and economic disadvantages arising from social discrimination against a part of the population in modern (1868-1945) and contemporary Japan (1945-). It is generally held that the particular form of discrimination responsible—‘buraku’ discrimination (buraku sabetsu 部落差別)—is related to the perception that the objects of discrimination are of ‘outcast’ descent.

After the elimination of most social status divisions, and in the absence of visible physical stigma, people formerly of ‘outcast’ status continued to be informally identified by their places of residence: the (mostly) former ‘outcast’ districts that became known during the late-Meiji period as ‘tokushu buraku’. Abbreviated in the early-twentieth century as a result of protests against that expression’s pejorative connotations, the term ‘buraku’ has since been used to specify a particular form of discrimination and the socio-economic problems it generates. Thus the term ‘burakumin’ (部落民 ‘buraku person’) refers to people singled out by ‘buraku’ discrimination because of their perceived links with ‘buraku’ districts (and so implicitly with former ‘outcasts’), and who consequently are affected by the ‘buraku problem’. Before any further discussion, some historical background may be useful to clarify the significance attributed to ‘outcast’ descent.

21 The literal translation of ‘buraku’ as hamlet is misleading in this context, as many ‘buraku’ are/were urban, not to mention large enough to be classified as villages or towns.
A brief pre-history

During the Edo period, Bakufu and domain officials adopted the term ‘eta’ (穢多)—the Chinese characters for which signify ‘very polluted’—to designate the principal ‘outcast’ status group. In theory, members of this group performed low-level policing duties and engaged in the production of leather goods. The name ‘eta’ was an explicitly pejorative one, which suggested that their principal group attribute was ‘pollution’ associated with those occupations. But the powerful aversion to pollution that is apparent in the term requires some explanation.

Ethnologists suggest that long-ago inhabitants of the contemporary Japanese islands referred to disruptions in the natural order such as death and birth as ‘kegare’ (けがれ), signifying a cyclical waning of energy (ki [ga] kareru 気枯れる) that was by no means a radically negative phenomenon. But the upper classes gradually came to consider kegare something to be avoided; amongst them, the term came to signify a quality roughly equivalent to the English terms ‘pollution’ or ‘defilement’ (kegare 穢れ). Their concerns heightened by Buddhist teachings discouraging the killing of animals and the eating of meat, the Heian-period (782-1185) aristocracy became quite obsessed with avoiding death-related pollution.

22 Revised early-Meiji population figures suggest that people of ‘outcast’ status numbered somewhere around 520,000 people, of whom the vast majority were classed as ‘eta’. See Akisada Yoshikazu 秋定嘉和, ‘Meiji shoki kaku fuhankan jinhyō kaidai’ 「明治初期各府藩県人員表解題」, in NSSS: 25, pp. 459-460.
23 Amino Yoshihiko 綱野善彦, Nihon no rekishi wo yominasu 『日本の歴史をよみなおす』 (東京：筑摩書房, 1991), pp. 89-90. See also Sakurai Tokutarō 櫻井德太郎, 'Kesshu no genen —minzokugaku kara tsiseki shita shōchikibukkyō to kōtō no paradaimu' 「経世の原点—民俗学から追記した小地域共同体構成のパラダイム」, in Tsurumi Kazuko and Ichii Saburō (eds.) 鶴見和子・市井三郎編, Shisō no bōken—shakai to henka no atarashi paradaimu 『思想の冒険—社会と変化の新しいパラダイム』 (東京：筑摩書房, 1974), pp. 221-228.
24 Introduced during the sixth century CE, Buddhist thought became influential in court circles during the eighth and ninth centuries. See Inoue Mitsuo 井上満郎, ‘Toshi shakai no sei-juku to
Court officials strove to protect the monarch, deities (kami 神) and shrines, not to mention themselves, from the pollution (especially in the form of sick and dead animals) that accumulated in the urban confines of the royal capital of Heiankyō (平安京, later Kyoto).\(^{25}\) To that end, early in the ninth century the authorities established an official police agency (the Kebiishichō 检非違使庁), one of whose tasks it was to deal with pollution,\(^{26}\) while tenth-century court officials compiled and promulgated a code of pollution, which is contained within a manual known as the Engishiki (延喜式, ‘Procedures of the Engi [901-923] era’).\(^{27}\)

In response to aristocratic and religious concern about pollution, professional cleansers emerged from the ranks of people known as ‘hinin’ (非人). This term referred originally to Buddhist priests who had severed their ties to the secular world, and who were not recorded on the official population registers (kōminseki 公民籍). Especially from the ninth century onwards, as more and more people absconded from the villages and towns where they were registered in an attempt to avoid taxation duties, they also became known as ‘hinin’,

\(^{25}\) See Yoshino Shūji 吉野秋二, ‘Hinin mibun seiritsu no rekishiteki zentei’ 非人身分成立の歴史的前提, *Hisutoria 『ヒストリア』*, vol. 164, April 1999, pp. 8-9; and Inoue Mitsuo 井上満郎, ‘Mibunseki no seiritsu to kodai shakai’ 身分制の成立と古代社会, in *KNBS*: 1, p. 16.

\(^{26}\) Inoue, ‘Toshi shakai no seiiku’ 帝都社会の体験, p. 24.

\(^{27}\) Inoue Mitsuo 井上満郎, ”Sen” mibun to ritsuryō sei’ 『順』身分と律令制, in *KNBS*: 1, p. 17.
together with a number of people who had committed criminal acts and former residents of financially troubled official hospices (*hidnen* 悲田院). 28

Living in riverbank and mountainside dwellings, many such people undertook work dealing with the treatment of pollution. In so doing, they gradually formed a range of loosely differentiated and informal occupational groupings. Around the early Kamakura period (1185-1335), such groupings included ‘*inujinin*’ (犬神人 ‘dog-god-people’, or low-level religious practitioners) who specialized in cleansing palace, shrine, temple and garden grounds; ‘*hinin*’ who conducted funerals and disposed of dead animals; and ‘*gokushū*’ (獄囚 prisoners) who engaged in execution and prison guard duties. People known as ‘*kawaramono*’ (河原者 ‘people of the riverbanks’) engaged in all the above activities. 29 The *Kebiishi* bureau employed many of them, as did major temples such as Enryakuji (延暦寺) and Kōfukuji (興福寺), as well as important shrines such as Gion (祇園社). 30

The purification services that ‘*hinin*’ provided were of great significance to aristocrats and religious officials. Nevertheless, changes in the way that the ruling elites referred to them indicate that attitudes towards such practitioners of cleansing, although perhaps never particularly positive, deteriorated over time. For example, pointing to their ability to cleanse pollution, ‘*kawaramono*’ who disposed of dead animals had sometimes been called ‘*kiyome*’ (清目). Literally meaning ‘cleanser’ or ‘purifier’, this title had unmistakeably positive

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connotations. But a late-thirteenth century dictionary known as the Chiribukuro (塵袋) contains an entry noting that 'kiyome' had become known as 'eta' (エタ), a term which in the author's opinion derived from 'etori'.

'Etori' (餌取, literally 'feed [or bait]-getter') was the occupational name given to court employees who cared for birds of prey in the eighth and ninth centuries. The term had thereafter become synonymous with 'butcher' (tosha 墨者 or toji 屠児), presumably because the duties of 'etori' required them to kill and butcher animals.31 Like butchers, the Chiribukuro entry states, 'kiyome' were 'bad people' (akunin 惡人) who killed animals, which was why they had become known as 'eta'.32

To begin with, the term 'eta' appears to have been written without the two Chinese characters signifying 'very polluted'.33 The combination of those two characters, which strengthened the pejorative sense of the term immeasurably, first appeared in a late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century text known as the Tengu zōshi (天狗草紙). Indirectly linking 'kawaramono' with 'eta', a brief fable in this work described how an 'eta child' (eta warawa 累多童) throttled a troublesome goblin (tengu) on a riverbank.34

However, the term 'eta' does not appear with any great frequency in early literary works; how commonly it was used prior to the fifteenth century remains obscure. Linking 'kawaramono' and 'eta' more explicitly, an aristocrat's 1428 diary entry in the Kennaiki (建內記) described 'kawaramono' as 'unclean' (fujō 不浄) people called 'eta' (穢多), who ought therefore to be relieved of their duty

32 Yokoi Kiyoshi 横井清, Chūsei minshū no seikatsu bunka 『中世民衆の生活文化』 (東京: 東京大学出版会, 1975), pp. 234-5.
33 Although an existing copy of the Chiribukuro contains the Chinese characters for 'eta', a later scribe probably inserted them. Kawashima Masao 川島将生, 'Chūsei kōki senmin no shokushō to senshi' 『中世後期賤民の職掌と職階』, in KNBS: 1, pp. 98-99.
34 See Yokoi, Chūsei minshū, pp. 231-4, 236.
of cleansing palace grounds. Likewise, the *Ainōshō* (塩襲抄) of 1446 recorded
that ‘kawaramono’ were sometimes known as ‘etta’, and that this was written
‘eta’ (穢多) because they were ‘dirty etori types’ (*etoritei no kitanaki mono* エト
リ穢の賦き者).36

These fragments suggest that those whose work involved ‘pollution’
became seen by members of the ruling strata as embodying the very quality they
were held capable of cleansing, and were disdained as a result. However, it is
necessary to note that ruling class concerns about pollution varied. Most
obviously, pollution regulations changed significantly during the turbulent period
from the late fifteenth to the late-sixteenth century that is known as the Warring
States Period (*Sengoku jidai* 戦国時代). While the tenth-century pollution code
contained in the above-mentioned *Engishiki* court manual stated that thirty days
of pollution afflicted those who came into contact with dead humans and that
those who had dealings with dead animals were polluted for five days, 37 a mid­
sixteenth century ‘pollution code’ stated that killing someone caused pollution
for that day only, while flaying stock carcasses entailed five days pollution.38

People who engaged in activities such as the flaying of stock carcasses
and the production of leather goods were to be denigrated as ‘etta’ during the Edo
period. But further illustrating the elastic nature of concerns about pollution,
sixteenth-century warlords, who found the services of producers of leather-based
military equipment such as armour and straps indispensable, addressed such

37 Pollution could be transmitted from polluted people to second and third parties, albeit with
decreasing virulence each time. Yamamoto Kōji 山本幸司, ‘“Kegare” to ha nani ka?’ ‘**『ケガ
38 Funagoe Masaru 船越昌, ‘Chūsei teihen minshū no keitai to sono dōkō’ ‘中世底辺民衆の形
態とその動向’, in *Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo* (ed.) 部落解放研究所編, *Kinsei buraku no shiteki
kenkyū*, jōkan 『近世部落の史的研究 上巻』(大阪：解放出版社, 1979), pp. 56-57.
craftsmen using the more neutral term ‘kawata’ (皮田・革田, meaning ‘hide worker’ in the first instance, and ‘leather worker’ in the second).39

Towards a ‘kawata’ status group

Upon taking power, the Tokugawa Bakufu set about constructing a social order in which people’s existences were to a large extent shaped by the status group into which they were born. The most fundamental division, established during the late-sixteenth century, separated rulers, or the military classes, from the ruled, who were in principle barred from possession of arms.40 Formal status designations, occupations, residential areas, the population register one was inscribed upon, and official duties (yaku 役) were among the circumstances that differentiated Edo-period status groups. In theory, people of ‘peasant’ status (hyakushō 百姓) inhabited rural villages where they engaged in agricultural production and paid their official dues. Those of ‘townspeople’ status (chōnin 町人) resided in towns and cities where they provided services, produced and traded commodities, and met official tax burdens. Receiving taxes, people of ‘military status’ (bushi 武士) governed benevolently and maintained the peace.41

39 Although the suffix ‘ta’ is suggested to be a sign of scorn or pollution, ‘kawata’ was much less offensive than the term ‘eta’. Okiura Kazumitsu 沖浦和光. ‘Kaisetsu: suhei=hito no yo ni hikari are’ 「解説 水平=人の世に光あれ」. in SHYH, pp. 265-268.
Whether early-Edo-period rulers considered leather-goods producing ‘kawata’ to form a distinct status group is a moot point. Whereas the late-sixteenth century separation between peasants, townspeople and the military classes was founded in law, no definite countrywide legislation determined the nature and bounds of a ‘kawata’ status group. Instead, it appears that as specific duties and occupational privileges were allocated to them, a fixed ‘kawata’ status group, whose primary official functions consisted of producing leather goods and undertaking low-level policing duties, came into being.

Leather was a significant commodity in the developing market economy of the Edo period. Indispensable in the production of certain sandals, strings for musical instruments and drums, it was also the main component of goods such as saddles, straps, and armour.

Several constraints affected the supply of leather goods. Namely, from the 1640s onwards, the Bakufu’s policy of maintaining only limited foreign relations restricted imports. By banning the slaughter of cattle and horses, government policy also affected domestic production. Thus law discouraged the raising of animals to meet the demand for leather, not to mention the  

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42 See, for example, Ochiai Shigenobu 落合重信, Kinsei buraku no chūsei kigen 『近世村落の中世起源』 (東京：明石書店, 1992), p. 13.
43 Huge quantities of leather were imported in the early-Edo period. See Wakita Osamu 萬田宗, Kinsei Osaka no keizai to bunka 『近世大阪の経済と文化』 (京都：人文書院, 1994), pp. 143-144. Opinions on the effect of ‘sakoku’ differ. Some propose that it put a complete stop to imports. See Nakanishi Yoshihito 中西義雄, ‘Toshi buraku no seisei to tenkai—Settsu Watanabe mura no shiteki kōzō’ 『都市部落の生成と展開—摂津渡辺村の史的構造』, 1959, in SBMR: 4, p. 212. Others suggest it caused import quantities to decrease. See Mae Keiichi 前圭一, ‘Kinsei chūkōki ni okeru “kawata” no keizai seikatsu’ 『近世中後期におけるかわたの経済生活』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落問題研究所編, Burakushi no kenkyū, zenkindai hen 『部落史の研究 前近代篇』 (京都：部落問題研究所, 1978), p. 257. But since Korean imports were still arriving in the early nineteenth century, trade in leather goods did not end by any means. See Tsukada Takashi 塚田孝, Kinsei no toshi shakaishi—Osaka wo chūshin ni 『近世の都市社会史—大阪を中心に』 (東京：青木書店, 1996), p. 146.
44 Presumably motivated by Buddhist and Shinto teachings, and by the authorities’ desire to maximize the productive use of stock, such bans were announced in 1612, 1687, 1732, 1750. See Mae, ‘Kinsei chūkōki ni okeru “kawata”’, p. 261; and Yamamoto Naotomo 山本尚友, ‘Kinsei senmin no seikatsu’ 『近世貧民の生活』, in KNBS: 1, pp. 308-309.
mustering and transport of animals to abattoirs towards the end of their working lives. Most horses and cattle died scattered around the country. 45

Many peasants were averse to flaying carcasses and engaging in leatherwork. This reluctance sprang from concerns about ‘pollution’ adversely affecting harvests, 46 and in some instances because people found the thought of flaying formerly precious stock repugnant. 47 Needless to say, people of military class generally felt such work to be beneath them; ‘kawata’ status people performed a vital productive function.

The Bakufu and many domains required people of ‘kawata’ status to supply the authorities annually with a certain quantity of leather goods. In return, they granted people of that status group automatic legal ownership of all dead stock. 48 To minimize waste, the authorities not only forbade people to dispose of

45 ‘Kawata’ status people did not invariably obey these decrees, especially during the late-Edo period. In Chōshū domain, some bred and slaughtered stock as prices for leather goods rose in the nineteenth century. See Nunobiki Toshio 布引敬雄, ‘Chōshū han no hisabetsu buraku’ 「長州藩の被差別部落」, in Buraku Kahiō Kenkyūjo 畜肉学会 (ed.), Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū, gekan, p. 230. From Osaka, others travelled the country buying up weak or sickly stock for a small sum. See Nakanishi, ‘Toshi buraku no seisei to tenkai’, p. 211. This phenomenon became apparent during the late-eighteenth century in Kyoto. See Yamamoto, ‘Kinsei senmin no seikatsu’, p. 308. Fujimoto Seijirō states that by the early-nineteenth century, it was common practice all around western Japan not only to buy dead stock, but also to purchase and then slaughter weak or sickly stock. Fujimoto Seijirō 藤本清二郎, ‘Kinsei “taore gyūsha shorisei” no tenkai to kaitai—kinai wo chūshin to shite’ 「近世『斬牛馬処理制』の展開と解体—厳内を中心として」, 1977, in SBMR: 4, pp. 536–537.

46 See Nunobiki, ‘Chōshū han no hisabetsu buraku’, pp. 222-223; and Nakanishi, ‘Toshi buraku no seisei to tenkai’, pp. 219-220.

47 See, for example, Tanaka Yoshio 田中喜男, ‘Kaga han ni okeru hisabetsu buraku’ 「加賀藩における被差別部落」, in Buraku Kahiō Kenkyūjo 畜肉学会 (ed.), Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū, gekan, p. 77. Concern with pollution and regard for profit clearly varied regionally. In Nagano and Kaga, commoner infractions of the ‘kawata’ monopoly were frequent, while mid-seventeenth-century Kumamoto peasants were still permitted to flay carcasses themselves. Ōtsuka Masafumi 大塚正文, ‘Higo no hisabetsu buraku’ 「肥後の被差別部落」, in Buraku Kahiō Kenkyūjo 畜肉学会 (ed.), Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū, gekan, p. 441.

48 A practice commenced by Sengoku-period daimyo in the 1520s. See Kawashima Masao 川嶋時生, ‘Hikaku sangyōsha he no seichō to nōminka’ 「皮革産業者への成長と農民化」, in KNBS: 1, pp. 147-148.
carcasses indiscriminately, but also required stockowners either to transport them to specified depots, or else have ‘kawata’ or ‘hinin’ (see below) status people come and collect them.

People of ‘kawata’ status divided their local districts up into carcass collection areas (known variously as kusaba 草場, dannaba 旦那場, sōjiba 掃除場, kiyomeba 清目場). Remote districts were not necessarily lucrative catchment areas. Due to the costs associated with acquiring and feeding stock, and because most peasants had relatively small land areas that could be worked by hand, stock-ownership was in fact uncommon in agricultural communities. Although there was obviously regional variation, Satō Tsuneo suggests that less than ten percent of all peasants owned cattle or horses, and fewer still used them in the fields. Around Kyoto, for example, carcasses were most common along the

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50 This was the main procedure in the central and eastern regions. See Shinozaki Tomio 細崎富雄, ‘Bushu Yoshimi no shokuba to taore gyūba shori」 (「武州吉見の職場と穂牛馬処理」), in Arai Kōjirō (ed.) 藤井光次郎編, Kantō/Tōkai hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū 『関東・東海被差別部落史研究』(東京 : 明石書店, 1982), p. 253; and Kubota Kazuo 久保田和男, ‘Shimotsuke no kuni chōri kogashira—Hanzaemon shihai」 (「下野国長吏小頭・半左衛門支配」), in Arai (ed.), Kantō/Tōkai hisabetsu burakushi, pp. 157-158.

51 This was the predominant pattern in western regions. In Kagawa, for instance, news of stock deaths would be transmitted to ‘eta’ status people who would come and collect the carcass. Miyoshi Shōichirō 三好易名, ‘Kinsei Ōmi burakushi no kenkyū」 (「近代播磨部落史の研究」), in Miyoshi Shōichirō (ed.) 三好易名編, Shikoku kinsei hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū 『四国近世被差別部落史研究』(東京 : 明石書店, 1982), p. 125. On the differences between the Kansai and Kantō areas, see Usui Toshimitsu 臼井壽光, ‘Zadankai: Edo to Kamigata no burakushi」 (「座談会—江戸と上方の部落史」), Buraku Kaihō 『部落解放』, May 1993, p. 21. Incidentally, there were no ‘kawata’ status people in Matsumae, where many horses and cattle were used for transport and labour purposes (over 10,000 in the mid-nineteenth century). To avoid wastage, the authorities commanded Ainu people to fay their carcasses. See Hokkaidō Chō (ed.) 北海道庁編, Shinsen Hokkaidō shi, vol. 2 『新撰北海道史 第2巻』(東京 : 丸善, 1937), pp. 768-769.

highways (stock used in transport), and in urban areas (horses belonging to the military classes). 53

Rights to profit from carcasses within each catchment area were akin to shares that owners held for certain days of the month or for specific localities. In most communities, a few wealthy ‘kawata’ monopolized those shares. Rather than engage in flaying and leatherwork themselves, they employed others to prepare hides for transport to specialist craftsmen in leather-working centres such as Osaka’s Watanabe village. 54

As the pax Tokugawa endured, the military significance of leather goods declined, and from the mid-to-late seventeenth century, officials tended to require ‘kawata’ status people to pay dues in rice or (more often) coin rather than in leather products. 55 To an extent, this burden was offset by the fact that popular demand for leather-based commodities rose steeply around the same time. 56

As the significance of leather goods to the military classes waned, rulers acted to expand the law and order functions undertaken by ‘kawata’ status

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53 Yamamoto, ‘Kinsei senmin no seikatsu’, pp. 312-313. Related to this point, in certain areas—the mountainous parts of Wakayama, for example—dead stock was much less important a resource than the deer, boar, and other pelts supplied by local hunters. See Maeda Masaaki 前田正明, ‘Kinsei ni okeru shojuuri torisabaki to hikaku seisan—Kishū wo jirei to shite 「近世における諸猟類取割きと皮革生産—紀州を事例として」, in Arimoto Masao Sensei Taikan Kinen Rombunshū Kankōkai (ed.) 有本正雄先生退官記念論文集刊行会編, Kinsei kindai no shakai to minshū 『近世近代の社会と民衆』 (大阪: 清文堂, 1993), pp. 137-8, 147-8.

54 In the Bakumatsu period, Watanabe village was home to over 5,000 people, many of whom were involved in leather goods production. Nakanishi, ‘Toshi buraku no seisei to tenkai’, pp. 211-212.

55 Wakita Osamu 脇田修, ‘Kinsei mibunsei to buraku no seiritsu 『近世身分制と部落の成立』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.), Burakushi no kenkyū, zenkindai hen, p. 144. This was increasingly the case for other status groups too. See Takagi Shōsaku 高木昭作, ‘Bakuhan taisei to yaku 『幕藩体制と役』, in Asao Naohiro et al. (eds.) 朝尾直弘ほか編, Nihon no shakaishi, vol. 3, Keni to shihai 『日本の社会史 第3巻 権威と支配』 (東京: 岩波書店, 1987), p. 315.

56 See Yokota, ‘Senshi sareta shokunin’, pp. 303-305.
people. Notably, in 1774, the Bakufu directed officials all around the country to mobilize ‘kawata’ status people for local and regional policing duties.\(^{57}\)

While the precise duties that Bakufu and domainal officials imposed upon regional ‘outcast’ groupings varied, they usually included guard- and execution-related work, and some degree of policing. In Hiroshima domain, the ‘kawata duty’ consisted of policing local villages, conducting punishments, and standing guard in prisons.\(^{58}\) The situation appears to have been similar in the northeastern regions,\(^{59}\) in Kyoto,\(^{60}\) in far-western Hagi domain,\(^{61}\) in the Wakayama area,\(^{62}\) and presumably elsewhere too.

The rise of popular denigration

Based on their involvement in low-level policing functions and leather goods production, the stereotyped notion that ‘kawata’ status people were

\(^{57}\) Goto Masato 后藤正人, ‘Bakuhan hōrei ni arawareta senmin shihai no shosō to tenkai’「幕藩法令にあわれた贱民支配の諸相と展開」, in Hōsei-shi Kenkyū 《法制史研究》, vol. 31, 1973, pp. 158-9. See also Yamamoto Naotomo 山本尚友, ‘Kinsei mibunsei no dōyō’「近世身分制の動揺」, in KNBS: 1, p. 376. Since the late-Heian period, ‘kawaramono’ in and around Kyoto had undertaken duties relating to the enforcement of law and order such as standing guard in prisons and conducting executions. See Kawashima, ‘Chūsei kōki senmin no shokusho’, pp. 94-95, and Yamamoto Naotomo 山本尚友, ‘Chūsei minshū no zentaizō’「中世民衆の全体像」, in KNBS: 1, p. 38. The use of low status people for such duties continued in the early-Edo period in Kyoto, Osaka, Nara and Hyōgo, for example, where those tasks were often undertaken in lieu of supplying rulers with leather goods. See Yokota, ‘Senshi sareta shokunin’, p. 303.


\(^{60}\) Tsuji Michiko 辻ミチ子, ‘Shimomurake no danzetsu to yakunin mura’「下村家の断絶と役人村」, in KNBS: 1, p. 266.

\(^{61}\) Nunobiki, ‘Chōshū han no hisabetsu buraku’, pp. 220-221.

‘lowly’ and ‘polluted’ developed and spread widely during the Edo period.\(^63\) Although that stereotype was obviously related to historical prejudices against people in certain ‘polluted’ occupations, it also had much to do with Edo-period official action. From the late-seventeenth century and especially during the eighteenth century, the waning significance of ‘kawata’-produced leather goods to the rulers did not just see the authorities saddle them with increased policing responsibilities instead. It also led to worsening official treatment, which had the effect of stimulating popular antipathy towards people of ‘kawata’ status.\(^64\)

Early-seventeenth-century popular sentiment towards pollution and people who dealt professionally with that quality was not necessarily strongly negative,\(^65\) and there was also considerable regional variation. With regard to the latter point, ‘kawata’ status people in Kyoto\(^66\) and Nara,\(^67\) for example, undertook cleansing activities for shrines. And while the ability to cleanse pollution—which inspired ‘fearful respect’ (ifu畏怖) until at least the Muromachi period (1335-1570)—is suggested to have become a source of loathing,\(^68\) a degree of respect for their powers over pollution probably continued


\(^64\) Miyoshi Ihei 三好伊平次, Dôwa mondai no rekishiiki kenkyû 『和問題の歴史的研究』 (東京: 世界文庫, 1968), pp. 183-184.

\(^65\) Miyoshi, ibid., p. 303.

\(^66\) Takagi Hiroshi 高木博志, Kindai temôsei no bunkashiteki kenkyû—tenô shûnin girei / nenjû gyôjî / bunkazai 『近代天皇制の文化史的研究—天皇就任儀礼・年中行事・文化財』 (東京: 校倉書房, 1997), pp. 171, 188. As Okiura Kazuteru points out, while some ‘outcast’ status people performed shamanistic rites rather similar to the emperor, the latter continued to be perceived as a ‘pure’ being whilst the former became perceived as people who embodied the very pollution that they cleansed. Okiura Kazuteru 沖浦和光, Tenô no kuni semnin no kuni—ryôkôoku no tabû 『天皇の国賤民の国—両極のタブー』 (東京: 弘文堂, 1990), p. 151.


\(^68\) This decline is attributed to a weakening of imperial and religious authority, and to the development of a popular sense of mastery over nature. Amino Yoshihiko positions these
to influence popular perceptions of ‘kawata’ throughout the Edo period in those regions. 

Magico-religious considerations aside, early-Edo-period relations between commoners and ‘kawata’ leather goods producers in Kaga domain (Ishikawa) are suggested to have been no different to those involving other craftsmen. In Shimotsuke (Tochigi), Kubota Kazuo suggests that there was little distinction between ‘people who suffered from discrimination’ (hisabetsumin 被差別民) and commoners during the early-Edo period, while in early-seventeenth century Tosa domain, the fact that whalers in financial trouble visited Osaka moneylenders of ‘eta’ status accompanied by two local ‘eta’ men is indicative of close relations. As Okiura Kazuteru suggests, early-seventeenth century ‘kawata’ people ‘were not especially despised and shunned’.

Bakufu and domainal measures to stigmatise ‘kawata’ during the mid-to-late-Edo period probably played a decisive role in imparting strong prejudices to
the populace more generally.\textsuperscript{74} Maki Hidemasa identifies two main phases in the making of official policies that encouraged popular denigration of ‘kawata’. There was an initial flurry of Bakufu activity during the Kyōhō period (1716-1736).\textsuperscript{73} Although government actions are not altogether clear, Kyoto and Edo ‘outcast’ leaders were ordered to present the authorities with accounts of their community lineage and history,\textsuperscript{76} while Bakufu directives gave rise, for example, to Hiroshima domain’s 1726 ban on ‘kawata’ mixing with commoners, on ‘kawata’ wearing clothing incommensurate with their station, and their having long tied hair,\textsuperscript{77} and to the similar bans announced in Shinano (Nagano) in 1738.\textsuperscript{78}

Secondly, a Bakufu decree that was promulgated across the country in 1778 decreed a deterioration in the morals of ‘eta, hinin, and the like’, denounced the fact that such people were mixing with peasants and generally being ‘arrogant’, and directed domainal officials to establish and enforce proper social divisions.\textsuperscript{79} No doubt a response to growing ‘outcast’ social mobility\textsuperscript{80}, this

\textsuperscript{74} Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也, Buraku ha naze nokotta ka『部落はなぜ残ったか』(東京：明治図書出版, 1975), p. 31; and Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也, ‘Kinsei hen’『近世篇』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo 部落問題研究所編, Buraku no rekishi to kaihō undo『部落の歴史と解放運動』(京都：部落問題研究所, 1954), p. 98.
\textsuperscript{75} Maki Hidemasa 彦英正, ‘Aneiki ikō ni okeru Bakufu no mibun seisaku ni tsuite’『安永期以降における幕府の身分政策について』, in Arai (ed.), Kantō/Tōkai hisabetsu burakushi, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{78} Ozaki Yukiya 尾崎行也, ‘Shinano no hisabetsu buraku」『信濃の被差別部落』, in Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū, gekan, p. 13. Measures aimed at clarifying social divisions were presumably part of the official response (sumptuary restrictions, population control, territorial expansion and so forth) to reaching environmental limits to growth (mine depletion, exhaustion of newly cultivable land, population increases, and so on)—a development that Totman situates around the turn of the eighteenth century. Conrad Totman, Early modern Japan (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 235-236.
\textsuperscript{79} Maki, ‘Aneiki’, pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{80} See Tsukada Takashi 畠田孝, ‘Kinsei kara kindai he’『近世から近代へ』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落問題研究所編, Kindai Nihon no shakaishiteki bunseki—tenōsei no buraku mondai 『近代日本の社会史的研究—天皇制下の部落問題』(京都：部落問題研究所, 1989), pp. 43-44; and Watanabe, Mikaihō buraku, pp. 8-9.
decree signalled the commencement of a countrywide move to use the term 'eta' as the official designation of the 'kawata' status group.

To list just a few of the resulting measures, Nobeoka domain (Miyazaki) officials ordered locals of 'eta' status to wear light blue and yellow coloured clothing (1779), Iyo domain (Ehime) ordered 'eta' to display leather badges whilst outside their community limits (1798). Tosa domain people of 'eta' status were banned from entering into commoner and military status houses in 1780, and from tying their hair in 1799, while the Shinano and Hiroshima measures of the 1720s and 1730s were repeated and reinforced in 1779 and 1781 respectively. Similar laws were enacted and repeated all over Japan during the last century of the Edo period.

Justifying the imposition of visible (behavioural and physical) stigma upon 'kawata' status people by reference to the occupation-derived 'pollution' that was alleged to permeate their beings, such laws attempted to make it evident to all that 'kawata' were a 'lowly' group who merited the pejorative name 'eta'. Official policy not only legitimised and reinforced any existing popular animosity towards 'kawata' status people (which could, for example, have been a factor of resentment over the compulsory transfer of dead stock, competition over water and other resources, or 'kawata' involvement in repressive judicial duties, as much as concerns about pollution), but also encouraged and even required practices involving avoidance and denigration of them.

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81Teraki Nobuaki 寺木伸明, 'Kinsei hisabetsumin no seikatsu to kaihō he no taidō' 「近世被差別民の生活と解放への努力」, in Inoue Mitsusada et al. (eds.) 井上光貞ほか編, Nihon rekishi taikei, vol. 3 新日本歴史体系 第3卷 (東京: 山川出版社, 1988), pp. 947-948.
82Tominaga, 'Tosa no hisabetsu buraku', p. 68.
83See Ozaki, 'Shinano no hisabetsu buraku', p. 13; and Hashimoto, 'Geibi no hisabetsu buraku', pp. 270-272.
84As Wakita notes, the fact that 'pollution' on its own was insufficient to bring about popular denigration, given the immunity of people-killing bushi from such sentiment, is one indicator of
Even so, the emphasis that rulers placed upon establishing a visual marker to allow the identification of ‘eta’ status people, and the desire to curtail existing interaction manifest in the repeated bans on mingling with others, suggest that the rift between people of ‘eta’ and other status groups was by no means absolute. Records also point to the existence of close and friendly relations with people of different status, and clearly counsel against any inclination to reduce the lives of ‘kawata’ status people to ostracism, poverty and denigration. To Herman Ooms’ observation that their relations with others were by no means solely determined by ‘pollution’, we can add that nor were those relations necessarily determined by or conducted in accordance with official instructions.

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86 See Nakao Kenji 仲尾健次, ‘Burakushi no kako, genzai, mirai’ 「部落史の過去・現在・未来」, in Asaji et al. (eds.), Datsujoshiki no buraku mondai, pp. 32-34.
Undermining the stereotype

We must also consider the important point that considerable numbers of ‘kawata’ status people, possibly even the majority, neither participated in law and order-related work nor engaged in leather goods production. Some left their home villages for the cities and lived out their lives as de facto or sometimes de jure townspeople,\(^{88}\) while most earned their livings by producing footwear, farming their own or rented land, and by labouring for others.\(^{89}\)

Shibata Hajime’s analysis of the situation of ‘kawata’ status people in Bizen and Mimasaka (Okayama) at the end of the Edo period indicates that the production of leather-soled sandals (setta 雪駄) was the primary economic activity of ‘kawata’ status women. Although men did flay stock carcasses in the area, most raw hides were transported directly to Osaka, so local leather-related activities were of limited economic significance. Most ‘kawata’ status people were peasants in all but name, he suggests, with seventy or eighty percent being poor tenant farmers (mizunomi hyakushō 水呑百姓) and the remainder being

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\(^{88}\) During the 1830s and 1840s, hundreds of people of ‘eta’ status from all around the Kansai region were found living amongst townspeople in Kyoto. Yamamoto, ‘Kinsei mibunsei no dōyō’, pp. 382-383. Hatanaka has uncovered details of comings and goings between Osaka merchants and ‘kawata’ status people in Watanabe village involving trade, marriage and socializing, and suggests that they are merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’. See Hatanaka Toshiyuki 細中敏之, ‘Mibun wo koeru toki—setta wo meguru hitobito’ 「身分を越えるとき—雪駄をめぐる人びと」, in Tsukada Takashi (ed.) 塚田孝編, Mibun teki shūen 『身分的周縁』 (京都：部落問題研究所, 1994), pp. 426-427.

direct tax-paying farmers *(takamochi hyakushō 高持百姓)*. Shibata goes on to record assertions made by local ‘kawata’ status people that since they owned just as much land and paid just as much tax, they were in fact no different from ‘honourable peasants’ *(onbyakushō dōyō 御百姓同様)*. ‘Kawata’ status people of this region were clearly conscious of the disparity between their actual situation and their official designation as ‘eta’. 

Hatanaka Toshiyuki has indicated that late-Edo-period ‘kawata’ in what is today Hyogo prefecture likewise characterized themselves as productive peasants who owned their own homes, paid taxes, and engaged in agriculture. In their view, ‘eta’ were a ‘lowly’ and ‘polluted’ type who neither owned their own homes nor engaged in agriculture, but dealt rather with animal carcasses and pelts. Despite themselves being labelled ‘eta’, they nonetheless had nothing in common with real ‘eta’, who, in their opinion, might be found elsewhere.

The ‘eta’ stereotype—to some extent shared by people classed within that status group—was founded on the notion that such people engaged in policing duties and leather goods production. The reality seems to have been that most people of ‘kawata’ status engaged in agriculture and footwear production. The incongruity between the two suggests denigration and avoidance of members of the ‘kawata’ status group was less a factor of ‘actual’ attributes than of officially assigned status.

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90 Shibata Hajime 柴田一，‘Bisaku chihō no hisabetsu buraku no tenkai’ 備作地方の被差別部落の展開，in Buraku Kaisho Kenkyūjo (ed.), *Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū*, gekan, pp. 192-195.

91 Shibata, ‘Bisaku chihō’，p. 195. Shibata notes that their land was mostly of an inferior quality; paying the same tax per farmed area as peasants meant that their standard of living was somewhat lower. See also Shibata Hajime 柴田一，*Shibuzome ikki ron* 『染染一換論』（東京：明石書店, 1995）, p. vi.

imposed stigma, the immensely negative connotations of the label ‘eta’, and no doubt also competitive and sometimes antagonistic political and economic relations between people of ‘eta’ and other status groups.95

**Hinin**

The other main Edo-period ‘outcast’ grouping was called ‘hinin’ (非人). As mentioned above, that term was used in the Heian period to refer to poor and unregistered people who engaged in the cleansing of pollution. During the Muromachi period, the term ‘hinin’ became virtually synonymous with ‘poor person’ (*hinin* 貧人).94 Subsequently, the Bakufu rendered ‘hinin’ into the name of a hereditary legal status that could also be acquired as punishment for crimes, or, as with most people in that status group, through impoverishment and subsequent registration as ‘hinin’.95 Presumably the ‘first’ people of ‘hinin’ status were simply ‘beggars’ (*kojiki* 乞食), as impoverished townspeople and peasants had been known officially until the mid-seventeenth century.96

‘Hinin’ groups were an urban phenomenon; the official functions of their members revolved around the maintenance of social order.97 In Edo, governed by four bosses (*Hinin gashira* 非人頭), they cleaned the streets, policed unlicensed beggars, and guarded the local hospital-cum-prisons (*tame* 溝). Four bosses known as *Chōri* (長吏) had authority over ‘hinin’ in Osaka, while the *Hidenin Elder* (*Hidenin toshiyori* 悲田院年寄) directed the activities of Kyoto’s ‘hinin’. In

93 See Hatanaka, ‘Kawata’ to *heijin*, p. 49.
both cities, ‘hinin’ status people performed duties analogous to their Edo counterparts, with Osaka and Kyoto ‘hinin’ additionally engaging in low-level policing duties and making inquiries and arrests.98 Other common economic activities of ‘hinin’ status people included the flaying of stock carcasses in the east of Japan (directed by ‘chori’99), fortune-telling, begging, theatrical and musical performances,100 and acting as celebrants and mourners.101 In rural areas, small numbers of ‘hinin watchmen’ (hininban) were commonly employed by one or several villages to help maintain local order.102 Different to people of ‘eta’ status, ‘hinin’ status people were in principle barred from mercantile pursuits.103

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101 Ishii, Edo no senmin, p. 128.

102 Yamamoto Naotomo 山本尚友, ‘Hininban’ 「非人番」, in Kyoto Burakushi Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kinsei no minshū to geinō 『近世の民衆と芸能』, pp. 120-125. The construction of a modern police force in Meiji Japan saw these ‘watchmen’ replaced by a professional police force, with former ‘hinin’ gradually excluded from their ranks in some areas on corruption-related grounds. See, for example, Kitazaki Toyoji 北崎豊二, Kinsei Ōsaka no shakaishiteki kenkyū 『近世大阪の社会史的研究』 (京都：法律文化社, 1994), pp. 40-41, 64-65. In other areas, they appear to have maintained their positions. See Obinata Sumio 大田秀夫, ‘Nihon kindai keisatsu no kakuritsu keitai to sono kōrō’ 「日本近代警察の確立過程とその考察」, in Yui Masao and Obinata Sumio (eds.) 高柳正日・大田秀夫編, Nihon kindai shisō taikai, vol. 3, Kanryō sei / keisatsu 『日本近代思想大系 第3巻 官僚制・警察』 (東京：岩波書店, 1990), pp. 474-476.

103 See Arao Kōjirō, Kinsei senmin, p. 30.
According to a late-eighteenth century statement by the Danzaemon, 'hinin' status, like 'eta' status, was inalterable in the regions under his control. Nonetheless, demoted commoners could generally revert to their former status during the first decade of their time in the 'hinin' status group by paying a small sum, and even that limitation lapsed during the Bakumatsu period. The authorities did not stringently enforce regulations on exiting the 'hinin' station in Osaka either. Even though the Bakufu and domainal laws that regulated people of 'eta' status usually applied also to those of 'hinin' status, Okamoto Ryōichi argues that in light of their ability to change status, there was no great gulf between people of 'hinin' status and middle- and low-class commoners. He suggests that people of 'hinin' status therefore did not face prejudices comparable to those directed at people of 'eta' status.

Academic approaches

After the 'outcast' status groups were abolished in 1871, the vast majority of people formerly classed as 'hinin', and especially those 'hinin' who resided in urban areas (including the elites), appear to have entered into the 'mainstream'. Their disappearance is one reason why attempts to explain the nature of the

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104 Namely Musashi (武蔵), Sagami (相模), Kōzuke (上野), Shimotsuke (下野), Hitachi (常陸), Kazusa (上総), Shimōsa (下総), and Awa (安房): the eight Kantō provinces (関東八州), or contemporary Tokyo, Saitama, Kanagawa, Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, and Chiba. The Danzaemon also controlled also parts of Kai (Yamanashi), Izu (Shizuoka), Tsuruga and Mutsu (in the contemporary north-east).

105 Ishii, Edo no semin, pp. 79-80, 127-8.


108 See, for example, Shiomi Senichirō 塩見鮮一郎, Edo no hinin gashira Kuruma Zenshichi—hyakumannin daitoshi wo "ura" de sasaeta otoko 『江戸の非人頭車善七百万人大都市を「裏」で支えた男』(東京: 三一書房, 1997), pp. 206-207.
modern ‘buraku’ problem have tended to focus on the circumstances of people formerly of ‘eta’ status. Other reasons for this focus include the fact that the ‘eta’ status group was the most populous and denigrated ‘outcast’ group, with immutable hereditary membership. But the main reason for the special attention directed at the ‘eta’ status group is the fact that those who were subjected to prejudiced treatment as ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ in the Meiji years were commonly seen to be the direct descendants of people formerly of ‘eta’ status, with the social discrimination aimed at them a continuation of Edo-period customary practices.

For example, Ishii Ryōsuke suggests that following emancipation in 1871, life in communities of people formerly classed in the ‘eta’ status group continued on largely as before, enabling others to continue identifying and avoiding them as ‘new commoners’ and later ‘burakumin’. Such genealogical continuity underpins Hasegawa Yoshikazu’s definitions of ‘burakumin’ as former ‘eta’ and their descendants, and ‘buraku discrimination’ as that particular form of discrimination directed at them. Teraki Nobuaki claims that this continuity is the ‘particularity of burakumin discrimination’. Other prominent scholars


110 Exceptionally, at the end of the Edo period in the Kantō regions where the Edo Danzaemon ruled over outcasts, it was possible for commoners to become ‘eta’. Therefore, Ishii Ryōsuke states, such people were probably able to revert to commoner status. Ishii, Edo no senmin, pp. 63, 234-5. In Shiga, one Bakumatsu leatherworking village became a farming community by selling their rights over stock carcasses to bushi, who paid a small sum to join the ‘eta’ status group. Shiga Ken Burakushi Kenkyūkai (ed.) 滋賀県部落史研究会編, Shiga no burakushi, vol. 2 『滋賀の部落 第2巻』(大津: 滋賀県同和事業促進協議会, 1974), p. 46.

111 Ishii, Edo no senmin, pp. 257-258.


including Suzuki Ryō, Minegishi Kentarō, Wakita Osamu, Watanabe Toshio, Suginohara Juichi and Narusawa Eiju likewise observe that most ‘burakumin’ emerged from or had family ties to the ‘eta’ status group.\footnote{See Suginohara Juichi 杉之原寿一, Buraku kaihō no ‘kyokō riron’ hihan 『部落解放の「虚構理論」批判』 (京都：部落問題研究所, 1999), pp. 51-52, 54-55; and Narusawa Eiju 成沢栄寿, ‘Nihon kindaika to buraku mondai no seirisu’ 「日本近代化と部落問題の成立」, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo, Buraku no rekishi to kaihō undō, kingendai hen, p. 88. Likewise, Herman Ooms states that descendants of ‘kawata’ are ‘the only persons in Japanese society today who continue to suffer discrimination because of their ancestor’s status during the Tokugawa period.’ Ooms, Tokugawa village practice, p. 244.} Straightforward genealogical linkages have given rise to the dominant view of the ‘buraku’ problem as an issue involving the carry-over of prejudices against ‘eta’ into modern times.

Naturally, no one argues that persistent prejudices fully explain ‘buraku’ discrimination in the modern era. Scholars and activists have ceaselessly debated why modernity, symbolized by such things as the dismantling of the ‘eta’ status group, the legislation of ‘equality’, and undeniable progress towards a capitalist economy with contract-based social relations (a ‘civic society’), failed to do away with prejudice and discrimination.\footnote{For a brief overview, see Kojida Yasunao 小路田泰直, ‘Nihon shihonshugi to buraku mondai’ 「日本資本主義と部落問題」, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kindai Nihon no shakaitshitetsu bunseki, pp. 208-209.}

To review a few of the main arguments, some historians point out that the Meiji state took little or no practical action to change ingrained custom or assist former ‘outcasts’ economically.\footnote{Aakisada Yoshikazu 秋定嘉直, Kindai Nihon jinsen no ayumi—shu toshite buraku mondai wo chūshin ni 『近代日本人権の歴史—主として部落問題を中心に』 (東京: 明石書店, 1992), pp. 41-42. See also Naramoto, Buraku ha naze nokotta ka, pp. 13, 68, 77.} Others focus on how the ‘tenno’ or ‘emperor’ system constructed during the Meiji period impeded the emergence of free and equal relations between Japanese subjects.\footnote{Mahara Tetsuo 马原哲男, ‘Tennōsei no kansei to buraku mondai’ 「天皇制の完成と部落問題」, Buraku 『部落』, August 1971, pp. 72-73. See also Kan Takayuki 神孝喜, Senmin bunka to tennosei 『贱民文化と天皇制』 (東京: 明石書店, 1984), pp. 15-16; Komori Tetsuo 小森哲郎, Dōwa mondai no kiso chishiki 『同和問題の基礎知識』 (東京: 明石書店, 1997), pp. 78-79.} A few attribute responsibility for
continued discrimination to the peculiar nature of Japanese capitalism, which in their opinion allowed or even encouraged feudal-type relations to persist. A variant of this argument holds that the construction of the modern Japanese state’s regional administration system allowed local elites to reproduce Edo-period patterns of socio-economic domination, especially by regional landowners over ‘burakumin’, and thereby contributed to the maintenance of ‘feudal’ prejudices. More recently, there has also been considerable interest in the notion that prejudices against ‘outcasts’ and their descendants were and still are related to deep-rooted popular beliefs about ‘pollution’.

In short, most scholars have displayed a concern with explaining the continuities that are a central feature of the ‘buraku’ problem. While this work is based upon the insights provided by such prior scholarship, I focus instead on the novelty of the Meiji-period circumstances of those who were particularized as ‘former eta’, ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’. This is partly motivated by my

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Inoue Kiyoshi 井上清, ‘Buraku ha ika ni kaihō sareru ka—burakushi ni motomeru mono’「部落はいかに解放されるか—部落史に求めるもの」, 1952, in SBMR: 1, pp. 120-121.


119 Specific status related duties and privileges aside, many Edo-period ‘outcast’ villages were ‘branch villages’, economically reliant upon land rented from commoner ‘main villages’ and under the political control of (peasant) main village headmen. See Hatanaka Toshiyuki 畑中敏之, ‘Kinsei sonraku shakai to “kawata mura”—Ôsaka shūhen ni okeru “honson tsuki” taisei no bunseki wo chūshin ni」近代村落社会と『大小村』—大阪域における『本村武士』体制の分析を中心に」, in Wakita Osamu (ed.) 鳥田修編, Kinsei Osaka chiiki no shiteki bunseki 『近代大阪地域の分析』(東京: 御茶ノ木書房, 1980), pp. 154-155.

120 Suzuki Ryō 鈴木良, ‘Chiiki shihai to buraku mondai—sono rekishi teki shodankai’「地域支配と部落問題—その歴史的諸段階」, 1979, in SBMR: 5, pp. 49-51; Suzuki Ryō 鈴木良, ‘Buraku mondai no seiritsu’「部落問題の成立」, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyûjo, Kindai Nihon no shakaihiteki bunseki, pp. 16-17, 30. For a similar view, see Nihon Kyōsantō 日本共産党, ‘Buraku kaihō no ikutsukano mondai’「部落解放のいくつかの問題」, 1975, in SBMR: 2, p. 49.

sense that those three labels refer to social groups that existed in different environments, and which were not necessarily linked to each other by ‘descent’ or by ‘feudal’ prejudices.  

For one thing, inquiry into so-called ‘miscellaneous outcasts’ (zatsu senmin 雑賤民) has not only revealed regional differences in the situation of ‘outcasts’, but has also made it clear that ‘outcast’ localities unrelated to the ‘eta’ status group became ‘tokushu buraku’ localities. A journalist with the Doyō Shinbun made this point in 1910, pointing out that the term ‘tokushu buraku’ ‘originally signified a place where living conditions differed from those of the mainstream’, without necessarily designating ‘former eta buraku’. The ethnologist Yanagita Kunio concurred with this view in 1913.  

The diversity of ‘buraku’ origins has also attracted attention more recently. Uesugi Satoshi identifies former ‘onbō’ (隱亡) and ‘hinin’ settlements around Hiroshima, other former ‘hinin’ areas in Saitama, Kyoto and Okayama, former ‘shuku’ (宿・廻) villages in Wakayama and Tottori, and former ‘tōnai’

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122 While terms such as ‘former eta’ were used in the media until at least the turn of the century, the term ‘new commoner’ was also used parallel to them from around the mid-1870s. The term ‘tokushu buraku’ was unknown until virtually the turn of the century, whereafter it quickly gained currency.

123 ‘Outcasts’ of a ‘customary’ nature who were not always targeted by the laws, restrictions and prejudices directed at ‘eta’. Watanabe suggests that as a very rough rule, ‘eta’ and ‘hinin’ did not engage in social intercourse or intermarriage (dōka 同火 / tsūken 通婚) with commoners, whereas ‘miscellaneous outcasts’ engaged in social intercourse but not intermarriage. Watanabe Hiroshi 渡辺広, ‘Kinsei senmin no shokeitai to sono genryū’ 「近世賤民の諸形態とその源流」, in Nishiyama Matsunosuke Sensei Koki Kinenkai (ed.) 西山松之助先生古稀記念会編, Edo no minshū to shakai 『江戸の民衆と社会』 (東京：吉川弘文館, 1985), p. 224.


126 ‘Onbō’, ‘hatsuya’, and ‘chasen’ (see below) were local names for ‘outcast’ groups whose members conducted cremations, tended graves, and so on.

127 Shuku (廻・廻) around Kyoto were customary outcasts who did not intermarry with peasants, though they engaged in agriculture and were registered as commoners. Tarashima Satoshi 田良島哲, ‘Shuku’ 「廻」, in Kyoto Burakushi Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kinsei no minshū to geinō, p. 16.
communities in Toyama that ‘became’ the locations of modern ‘buraku’ communities. Ishimoto Kiyohide also observes that many contemporary ‘buraku’ areas were sites of Edo-period ‘hinin’ settlements, and notes that former ‘hatsuya’ (鉢屋) areas in the Sanin region and former ‘chasen’ (茶筅) areas in the Chūgoku region developed into ‘buraku’ districts.

Exceptionally, there are also modern ‘buraku’ areas that have only rather tenuous ties to Edo-period ‘outcasts’. The area that was informally known as Shinkawa (新川) in Fukiai district on Kobe city’s eastern fringe is a case in point. During the 1870s, a workhouse (Nihyakunibeya 二百人部屋) housing poor labourers, orphans and discharged criminals was constructed there. During the 1880s, the construction of doss-houses, brothels, and an abattoir had the effect of cementing the area’s low-class character. In 1892, the prefectural authorities designated it to be Kobe’s sole doss-house (kichinyado 木蔵宿) operating district, and it subsequently became one of Japan’s premier ‘slum’ districts.

128 In Kaga, ‘kawata’ (rarely called ‘eta’) engaged in leather trades; members of a more populous ‘outcast’ group known as ‘tômai’ performed policing duties, torture, the disposal of bodies, and so forth. See Tanaka, ‘Kaga han “tômai” no kenkyû’, pp. 274, 294, and Tanaka, ‘Kaga han ni okeru hisabetsu buraku’, pp. 58-60.
129 Uesugi Satoshi 上杉聡, Tennôsei to buraku sabetsu 『天皇制と部落差別』 (東京: 三一書房, 1990), pp. 70-71.
130 Ishimoto Kiyohide 石元清英, Nôson buraku—sono sangyô to shûrô 『農村部落—その産業と就労』 (大阪: 関西大学出版部, 1991), pp. 38-40. Although their name suggests they were tea-whisk makers, ‘chasen’ were considered equivalent to ‘eta’ in Hagi domain (Yamaguchi), for example. See Nunobiki, ‘Chôshû han no hisabetsu buraku’, p. 221.
132 Murata Seiji (ed.) 村田誠治編, Kôbe kaikô sanjûnen shi, gekan 『神戸開港三十年史 下巻』 (神戸: 金子印刷, 1898), p. 629. Ochiai Shigenobu suggests that despite the developments of the 1880s, Shinkawa only became a populous ‘slum’-type area after the 1890s, when road and bridge improvements were undertaken and tea, textile, rag and other companies joined the bamboo, coal, steel and match enterprises that operated in the area. See Ochiai Shigenobu 落合重信, ‘Kôbe ni okeru sakarabi to uramachi—Meiji matsu kara Shôwa shoki he’ 「神戸における盛場と裏町—明治末から昭和初期へ」, in Minami Hiroshi et al. (eds.) 南博ほか編, Kindai shomin seikatsu, vol. 2, Sakariba / uramachi 『近代庶民生活誌 第 2 巻 盛場・裏町』 (東京: 三一書房, 1984), pp. 418-419.
Over time, observers also began labelling it a ‘buraku’ area. In 1907, the Kōbe Shinbun informed readers that ‘Shinkawa is mostly inhabited by new commoners’,\(^{133}\) while the journal of a semi-official ‘buraku’ reform organization known as the Imperial Justice Association (Teikoku Kōdōkai 帝国公道会) described it in 1915 as a poor area whose inhabitants were mostly ‘burakumin’.\(^{134}\)

Mahara Tetsuo speculated in 1971 that most abattoir workers might have been ‘burakumin’.\(^{135}\) But whether many or most Shinkawa residents were ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ by ‘descent’ is in fact uncertain.\(^{136}\) Indeed, the actual descent of residents was irrelevant, given that other people believed that residents were ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’. In other words, whatever their ancestral background, for all practical purposes, residents were ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’.

For the moment setting aside the question of how an area became considered a ‘tokushu buraku’, it can be said that residence in areas generally considered ‘new commoner’ or ‘buraku’ localities sufficed in practice for people

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\(^{133}\) Kōbe Shinbun 『神戸新聞』, 25 December 1907, quoted in Nunokawa Hiroshi 布川弘, ‘Kōbe “Shinkawa” no seikatsu kōzō ni kansuru nōto’ 『神戸 『新川』の生活構造に関するノート』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.), Kindai Nihon no shakai shūteki bunseki, note 2, p. 266.

\(^{134}\) ‘Hyōgo ken Kōbe Kyōshikai setsuritsu dōki’ 『兵庫県神戸橋修会設立動機』, Kōdō 『公道』, October 1915, in KBSS: 6, pp. 187-189. To be precise, this text characterized residents as ‘drifting poor people’ (furōteki saimin 流浪的細民), and categorized most of them as ‘undeveloped burakumin’ (kōshin burakumin 後進部落民).


\(^{136}\) Anbo Norio 安保則夫, Minato Köbe—korera / pesuto / suranu—shakai shi sabetsu keiseishi no kenkyū 『名大神戸—コレラ / ペスト / スラム—社会的差別形成史の研究』(京都: 学芸出版, 1989), p. 269. Work of the 1910s and 1920s was speculative. Kagawa Toyohiko 賀川東雉 fantasized that Shinkawako somehow developed around a core of 200 ‘tokushumin’ (Kagawa Toyohiko 賀川東雉, ‘Hinmin shinri no kenkyū’ 『貧民心理の研究』, 1915, in Kagawa Toyohiko 賀川東雉 Kankōkai (ed.) 賀川東雉全集刊行会編, Kagawa Toyohiko zenshū, vol. 8 『賀川東雉全集 第8巻』(東京: キリス托新聞社, 1962), p. 41). Subsequently, the economist Inoue Teizō 青保成一 wrote of one part of Shinkawa that ‘it is said that burakumin from Shikoku and elsewhere are congregating [there], and it is thought that their numbers are considerable’. Inoue Teizō 青保成一, ‘Hinminkutsu to shōsū dōhō’ 『貧民窟と少数同胞』, 1923, in NSSS: 25, p. 744.
to be stigmatised as ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’.\textsuperscript{137} Although Hasegawa Yoshikazu insists that ‘burakumin’ differentiated between themselves and newcomers who settled in ‘their’ districts\textsuperscript{138}, nothing suggests that those who discriminated against residents of ‘buraku’ districts in their everyday lives during the Meiji period took care to distinguish between long-time and newly arrived residents. A few examples may serve to make this point.

In the mid-1870s, the villagers of Kawashiri (川尻) in Hyōgo prefecture’s Ikuno district requested official permission to change their village name. When travelling around the district, inhabitants of an adjacent ‘new commoner’ community were apparently letting it be known that they were from Kawashiri.\textsuperscript{139} That, residents complained, was causing people to mistake Kawashiri villagers for ‘new commoners’ and to denigrate them as such.\textsuperscript{140}

In 1899, the \textit{Ehime Shinpō} printed the story of the son of a former Hagi domain (Yamaguchi) bushi. After his father became impoverished during the early-Meiji years, the son found himself living in a ‘new commoner’ community. Conscripted in 1892, he fought in the Sino-Japanese war, during which time his army comrades identified and denigrated him as an ‘eta’. However, upon returning to Japan, an aged relative surfaced to vouch for his illustrious ancestry, and he was able to revert to his birth status of a former military class man (shizoku 士族).\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{137} Akisada, \textit{Kindai Nihon jinken}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{138} Hasegawa, ‘Buraku mondai ni okeru mibun to kaikyū’, p. 318. This point is reprised in chapter six.
\textsuperscript{139} During the Edo period, it was common for residents of ‘outcast’ status communities to identify their provenance by use of the name of neighboring peasant villages; such usage was sometimes officially recognized. See Watanabe, \textit{Mikaihō buraku no keisei to tenkai}, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{140} This village petition in contained in the ‘Ikuno daikansho monjo’ 「生野代官所文書」, June 1876, in \textit{KBSS}: 2, p. 343.
\textsuperscript{141} ‘Kinnōka no iko ryūi shi shinheimin to naru’ 「勤王家の遺孤流離して新平民となる」, \textit{Ehime Shinpō} 『愛媛新報』, 18 March 1899, in \textit{KBSS}: 4, pp. 281-282.
The leaders of Hiuchi village in Hyogo prefecture’s Kawabe district provide us with another example. In 1919, they drafted a village history in which they appealed to others not to think of them as ‘burakumin’. They stated that villagers comprised of two discrete populations, one of ‘kawata’ stock and the other of peasant stock. Over an unspecified period, some ‘kawata’ had taken up farming, and some peasants had taken up leather goods production. Due to such processes, the authors complained, others now unjustly deemed even those of good peasant stock to be ‘burakumin’.142

While cases of ‘miscellaneous outcasts’ and peasants being taken for ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ are clearly exceptional, and only involved relatively small numbers of people, they suggest that the connection between ‘eta’ status people (kawata/chōri), ‘new commoners’, and ‘burakumin’ is unreliable. There remains the proposition that ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ were denigrated and ostracized in the modern period not because of their actual descent, but because of their perceived descent, and that the ‘buraku’ problem involves persistent anti-‘eta’ prejudices. However, such custom- and law-based prejudices were explicitly invalidated by legal equality, not to mention undermined by the dismantling of the Edo-period ‘outcast’ system and of the ‘eta’ status group with it. Prejudices persisted in the rapidly changing environment of Meiji-period Japan by evolving and acquiring new significance. It is to those processes that I wish to turn in this work.

Recent trends

Responding to the various concerns outlined above, a more sustained focus on the explicitly modern aspects of the ‘buraku’ problem, and particularly upon the Meiji-period conditions in which ‘buraku’ areas developed, has become prominent in recent years. Reviewing the formative processes of such areas, Kobayashi Takehiro has proposed that any location presenting the wrong combination of undesirable features (high rates of crime, disease, poverty, and so on) could have become a ‘buraku’ area, ‘even without the historical foundation of having been an “eta village”’. Hatanaka Toshiyuki has likewise argued that people ‘did not become “burakumin” because their ancestors were of the “kawata” station’. Rather, ‘burakumin’ were ‘created within modern society’. That is, ‘even if there was locational or genealogical continuity [between them...], the “kawata” villages and “kawata” status group of the pre-modern period, and “buraku” and “burakumin” of the modern period, cannot be taken to be qualitatively continuous things.’

In light of the fact that the negative qualities represented as characteristic of ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ in the Meiji years were peculiarly

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144 Kobayashi, “Tokushu buraku” to ha nani ka’, pp. 4-6.

145 Hatanaka Toshiyuki 畑中敏之, ‘Mibun / mimoto / aidentiti—“burakumin” to ha dare no kotonanoka’「身分・身元・アイデンティティー“部落民”とは誰のことなのか」, Koperu 『コペル』, April 1997, p. 5. See also Anbo Norio 安保則夫, ‘Nihon kindaika to buraku mondai’「日本近代化と部落問題」, in Ryōke, Nihon kindaika to buraku mondai, pp. 15-16.

146 Hatanaka Toshiyuki 畑中敏之, ‘Burakushi’ no owari 『「部落史」の終わり』(京都: かもがわ出版, 1995), pp. 10-11, 56-59; Hatanaka Toshiyuki 畑中敏之, “Kaihorei” kenkyūshi no saikento「解放令」研究史の再検討, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo, Kindai Nihon no shakaishiteki bunseki, p. 100. As well as initially reflecting the power of anti-‘eta’ prejudices, the preponderance of ‘buraku’ areas with geographical or genealogical links to the ‘eta’ status group reflects the fact that in the modern era, such areas and their residents were more susceptible to social marginalisation, and thus to negative representation as ‘special settlements’. 

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modern’, including lack of hygiene, ignorance, deviant morality, foreign ancestry, and so forth (as this thesis will make clear), this is a very significant point. Some scholars have been led to suggest, albeit briefly, that ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ were posited as an ‘other’ during the nationalization (kokuminka 国民化) process of the Japanese population.¹⁴⁷ Beginning with an exploration of what that might have entailed in practice, this thesis looks at the development of the ‘buraku’ problem in tandem with the making of the Japanese nation-state.

This thesis’ first section considers the differences that people uncovered in, or rather attributed to, ‘new commoners’ and ‘buraku’ residents. More precisely, chapter two will deal with the phenomenon of ‘marriage avoidance’, examining how a practice with customary roots was justified and encouraged by representations of the ‘defective’ nature of ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’. Approaching the matter from another angle, the third chapter traces the rise and spread of theories that attempted to explain and justify prejudices by means of claims that such people had foreign origins.

The next section details how local action against discrimination tended to become aligned with national aims. Chapter four examines the promotion of ‘emigration’—represented as a means of becoming a ‘true national’—and considers how that practice might have fostered a sense of national belonging in real life. The fifth chapter then takes up the practice of national service, looking

at how desires for liberation from prejudice linked up with the performance of explicitly 'patriotic' military-related acts.

In the third section, the focus shifts to practical anti-discriminatory moves of a more organized kind that aimed to establish and cement the 'national belonging' of 'buraku' residents. Chapter six considers the rise of autonomous urban reform programs that aimed to turn 'buraku' areas into 'model' urban districts, while chapter seven then considers the rise of lifestyle reform campaigns that aimed to turn 'buraku' residents into 'model' citizens.

Through the prism of 'buraku' issues, this thesis thus attempts to examine the creation of 'internal others', struggles by such people to gain recognition as full national subjects ('citizens'), and the way in which anti-discriminatory moves tended to be co-opted by the nation-state structure. In short, it explores some of the concrete processes whereby people cleave to the 'nation', and how that structure draws people in further, even as they seek to overcome the various predicaments generated by it.

**Note on terminology**

My use of terms such as 'new commoner' and 'eta' and so forth, despite the quotation marks that are intended to convey their problematic nature, unavoidably reverberates with the past uses made of those words, and the pain of the people hurt by them. From that perspective, it would perhaps have been better to use euphemisms and neologisms.

I have not done so, in large part due to my unease with the manner in which people have applied the term 'buraku' (or 'discriminated buraku') to historically discrete phenomena. In so doing, some have produced pseudo-
national ‘buraku histories’ that appear to trace the past of, which is to say produce, some ‘ethno-racial’ entity whose primary attribute is deemed to be an ahistorical susceptibility to prejudice and victimhood.\textsuperscript{148} I also imagined that I might, to a small degree, demonstrate the changeability of ‘prejudice’ and ‘discrimination’ by reflecting the historical evolution of certain pejorative terms in my writing. My selection of this tactic is related to the points that I wish to make in this thesis. But it is merely one of several possible approaches; like the alternatives, it has its advantages and its drawbacks.

\textsuperscript{148} On ‘national history’, see, for example, Imanishi Hajime 今西一. ‘Kindai Nihon no kokumin kokka to buraku mondai’ 「近代日本の国民国家と部落問題」, in Zenkoku Burakushi Kenkyū Kōryūkai (ed.) 全国部落史研究交流会編, Burakushi Kenkyū, vol. 3, Buraku minshū / kokumin kokka von to Suihei undō 『部落史研究 第3号 部落民衆・国民国家論と平和運動』 (大阪：解放出版社, 1999), pp. 82-107. On the potential for linguistic confusion and other pitfalls, see Hatanaka Toshiyuki’s ‘Burakushi’ wo tou, pp. 28-32, or Hatanaka Toshiyuki 坂中敏之, ‘‘Burakushi’ no kansei—‘buraku mondai ha rekishi ni kiin suru’ no ka ‘『部落史』の詭弁—『部落問題は歴史に起因する』のか」, Gendai Shisō 『現代思想』, vol. 27, no. 2, February 1999; or Hatanaka, ‘Burakushi no owari.'
Chapter two

Intimate relations with ‘others’

Edo-period marriage patterns

This chapter looks at how Meiji-period representations of ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ as defective types helped to justify, and thus to maintain, the prejudiced treatment meted out to them by others. To explore possible connections between discourse and popular practices involving denigration and avoidance, I have chosen to focus in this chapter on marriage.

To begin, a broad overview of Edo-period marriage practices may be of use. The rulers of Tokugawa Japan constructed a social order in which all people were classed in hereditary status groups. In principle, each status group ‘was to be residentially segregated and occupationally distinct, have a separate lifestyle, and recruit exclusively from its own ranks’.1 Taking the last case, or status group endogamy, people’s lifestyle practices largely conformed with official

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prescription. But, as Fujimoto Seijirō has observed, this reflected not just the power of law, but also more immediate ‘familial’ interests.2

In late-Edo Japan, people were first and foremost members of ‘households’ (‘ie’ 家), which can be described as family units of production and consumption. Usually centred on a married couple and their offspring, members saw to the welfare and future of their ‘ie’ not just because their own well-being was inextricably linked to its fortunes, but also from a concern with ensuring that succeeding generations continued to worship household ancestors. Ancestor worship was the population’s principal religious practice and, as Nobushige Hozumi put it, ‘It was due to the dead that the descendants should not become extinct.’3 Ancestral obligations required action to perpetuate the household or ancestral name (kamei 家名, or yagō 屋号).4 To that end, people continued on industriously with their household occupations (kashoku 家職), striving to consolidate their household property (kasan 家産).5 One result was that they were inclined to select marriage partners of the same occupational background who, given the connection between status and occupation, were usually people of the same status group.

The tendency towards status group endogamy was also a function of the fact that households existed within tightly-knit networks of same-status

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4 As a rule, although the common people of the Edo period did not have official family names, ‘most households had a widely recognized appellation’. See Yanagita Kunio (ed.) 柳田国男編, Meiji bunkashi, vol. 13, Fūsoku hen 『明治文化史 第13巻 風俗篇』(東京：洋々社, 1954), pp. 144,147; and Ito Mikiharu 伊藤幹治, Kazoku kokkakan no jinruigaku 『家族国家観の人類学』(京都：ミネルバ書房, 1982), p. 12.
households in residential areas that were separate from those of other status groups. Marriage and lineage group bonds, shared interests in the maintenance of order, worship of common tutelary deities, communal land and water use, and shared tax-paying obligations were some of the things that linked the members of urban and rural communities. These consequently tended to be exclusive, especially when it came to dealings with outsiders.\(^6\) Further, community leaders tended to pressure people to select suitable marriage partners of appropriate status.\(^7\) In short, local and household practices were consonant with the Edo-period status system.\(^8\)

It is necessary to add that while law and custom greatly circumscribed the marriage prospects of those classed in the 'outcast' status groups with people of other status groups, strong prejudices against them also constituted a formidable barrier to such unions. More than anything, marital alliance with people deemed to be 'polluted' was unthinkable from the perspective of the need to honour ancestors.\(^9\)

\(^{6}\) Ōto Osamu 大藤修, 'Kinsei' 「近世」, in Sekiguchi Hiroko et al. 関口裕子ほか著, Nihon kazokushi—kodai kara gendai he 『日本家族史—古代から現代へ』 (千葉県松戸市: 楢出版, 1989), p. 165. Needless to say, internal fractures along class and other lines were not absent, but tended to be relegated to secondary importance when it came to external threats. See Ōishi Shinzaburō 大石慎三郎, Kinsei sonraku no kōzō to ie seido 『近世村落の構造と家庭制度』 (東京: 御茶の水書房, 1968), p. 221. Such solidarity sometimes saw village men impede marriages by village women to outsiders. See Kamishima Jirō 神島二郎, Nihonjin no kekkonkan 『日本人の結婚観』 (東京: 講談社, 1977), p. 28; and Haga Noboru 芳賀登, Nihon seikatsu bunkashi joron 『日本生活文化史読論』 (東京: つくば社, 1994), pp. 112-113. On the situation of urban communities, see, for example, Inui Hiromi 井上弘美, 'Kinsei kōki no machi kyōdōtai' 「近世後期の町共同体」, Hisutoria 『ヒストリア』, vol. 131, June 1991, pp. 50-51.

\(^{7}\) On the rural situation, see Ōto Osamu 大藤修, Kinsei nōmin to ie / mura / kokka—seikatsu / shakaishi no shiza kara 『近世農民の家・村・国家—生活史・社会史の視座から』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 1996), p. 71. Fukawa suggests community approval of townspeople marriages was similarly of great importance. Fukawa Kiyoshi 布川清司, Kinsei chōnin shisōshi kankei—Edo / Ōsaka / Kyōto chōnin no bai 『近世町人思想研究—江戸・大阪・京都町人の場合』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 1983), pp. 146-7.

\(^{8}\) Ōto, Kinsei nōmin to ie, pp. 12-13.

\(^{9}\) Ōto Osamu discusses the relation between ancestor worship and discrimination in his Kinsei nōmin to ie (pp. 374-375) with reference to the work of Ariizumi Sadao 有泉貞雄, 'Yanagita Kunio kō—sosen sūhai to sabetsu' 「柳田国男考—祖先崇拝と差別」, Tenbō 『展望』, vol. 162,
Not only did people of ‘outcast’ status almost exclusively marry others of the same ‘outcast’ group. To take the two main groupings, ‘eta and hinin are of different lineage type (shushō 種姓) and do not intermarry or have social relations’, recorded one compilation of Edo-period customary law.10 Shiomi Senichirō mentions that ‘it is even said that chōri buraku people [entrusted with policing duties] disliked intermarriage with leather-working buraku people’, despite the fact that both were nominally of ‘eta’ status.11 In somewhat similar fashion, members of the primarily agricultural ‘shuku’ (夙・宿) ‘outcast’ group did not intermarry with people of any other groupings.12 To a degree, these phenomena reflect stratification between the ‘outcast’ groups, with ‘shuku’, for example, only being customarily ‘outcast’ and in fact officially registered as commoners, and ‘eta’ status people being formally ranked higher than those of ‘hinin’ status. Group in-marriage was also encouraged by community solidarity, and by attempts to protect group interests. For instance, leaders of some ‘outcast’ groups enforced group endogamy in the aim of preventing the dispersal of group property and privileges.13

June 1972. Exceptions undermine every such generalization. Iketa suggests marriages between ‘eta’ status watchmen and commoners were not uncommon in the Tanba area during the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. See Iketa Ryōji 井ヶ田良治, ‘Kinsei kōki no buraku sabetsu seisaku’ [近世後期の部落差別政策], in SBMR: 4, p. 315.


11 Shiomi Senichirō 塩見鮮一郎, Sabetsugoto kindai sabetsu no kaimei 『差別語と近代差別の解明』 (東京: 明石書店, 1995), p. 62. Shiomi takes the Kantō usage of chōri as a term equivalent to ‘eta’, designating especially those engaging in policing activities. Again, there are exceptions. In the Niigata area, there appears to have been some degree of intermarriage between watashimori (渡守) who guarded river crossings and suchlike locations, and ‘eta’ status people. See Satō Yasuharu 佐藤泰治, ‘Echigo ni okeru “buraku” keiseiki 『越後における『部落』形成期』 in Harada Tomohiko and Tanaka Yoshio (eds.) 原田多彦・田中義男編, Tōhoku / Hokketsu hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū 『東北・北越被差別部落史研究』 (東京: 明石書店, 1981), pp. 123, 152.


Within the bounds of their status groups, most people unsurprisingly married people with whom they interacted inside the relatively limited geographical spheres of their everyday lives. People of ‘eta’ status (‘kawata’ and ‘chōri’) were no exception, commonly marrying people of the same or neighboring communities, as noted in Okayama, the Minamiōji village of Osaka’s Izumi area, and in Hyogo, for example.

One characteristic of such communities was that they also manifested a comparatively high rate of out-marriages to people of distant areas. Two main factors explain this phenomenon. One was that the marriage options of people in small and or isolated communities were limited. In all likelihood, this was one of the principal reasons for the wide-ranging marriage networks that existed among residents of the relatively small ‘eta’ status communities (twenty houses and one hundred or so people) of Musashi province in what is today the greater Tokyo area, as well as among those in the Nagano region. In northeastern Sendai,
'eta' status people faced great difficulties in procuring suitable marriage partners because they were few in total, and consequently developed the custom of acquiring wives from as far away as five or ten ri (里, one ri=approximately 4 km, thus roughly twenty to forty kilometres).20

The other main factor was that the mercantile activities of some, revolving around commodities including leather goods and footwear, saw them establish wide-ranging trade networks that frequently also entailed marriage-based linkages. While the vast majority of Osaka's Minamiōji village marriages took place within the village, out-marriages also constituted around twenty percent of the total. And apart from joining local communities, such alliances linked 'kawata' status people across the provinces of Settsu, Kawachi, Kii, Yamato, and Yamashiro, or the whole Kinai area. This presumably reflected local trading patterns.21 In his study of 'kawata' in the Wakayama area, Watanabe Hiroshi noted a similar degree of community exogamy, with marriage networks linked to local trading activities extending not only to the Osaka area, but also to Kyoto and Shizuoka.22 Shibata Hajime adds that the local Okayama marriage and adoption networks that he has examined stretched to current-day Hyogo, as well as to Shikoku and to Izu.23

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20 Saitō Yōichi 斎藤洋一, 'Hisabetsu buraku to chiikishi kenkyū—Gorōbe Shinden'「被差別部落と地域史研究—五郎兵衛新田」, in Asao Naohiro et al. (eds.) 朝尾直弘ほか編, Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi, vol. 23 『岩波講座日本通史 第23巻』 (東京：岩波書店, 1994), p. 336. Saitō adds that this was the case in large communities too.

21 Minokasa Sei 三好昌生, 'Kyū Sendai han hōnai no eta'「旧仙台藩封内の eta」, Minzoku to Rekishi 『民族と歴史』, vol. 2, no. 1, August 1919, pp. 304-306. Similar problems were almost certainly faced by all isolated communities. Alex Kerr surmises that the custom of offering sexual favours to travellers developed in certain remote areas as a way of infusing fresh blood into communities. Alex Kerr, Lost Japan (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 1996), p. 37.

22 Watanabe Hiroshi 渡辺広, Mikaihō buraku no keisei to tenkai—Kishū wo chūshin toshite 『未開放部落の形成と展開—紀州を中心として』 (東京：吉川弘文館, 1977), pp. 154-5.

23 Shibata, Shibuzome, pp. 54-55.
It is likely that those who contracted marriages as a result of their involvement in trade networks were of the upper socio-economic strata. In order to maintain and improve the social, economic and political standing of their households, Edo-period peasant elites and merchants commonly contracted arranged marriages with distant households of similar standing.\textsuperscript{24} ‘Outcast’ elites did likewise, with more explicit examples than those hinted at above visible in the fact that the households of the Danzaemon and those of other wealthy ‘kawata’ status merchants were enmeshed in marriage and adoption networks stretching from Edo to at least the Kansai area.\textsuperscript{25} In Hiroshima and Fukuchiyama domains, ‘kawata’ status people—presumably of the upper strata—‘selected their marriage partners according to descent, rank, and station [... In doing so,] it was common for them to transcend district and domainal boundaries’.\textsuperscript{26} A similar situation probably prevailed in Kyoto, where ‘upper class marriages involved go-betweens’, or in other words, took the form of arranged marriages between households of similar standing.\textsuperscript{27}

To summarize the main Edo-period marriage patterns of ‘eta’ status people, community and household considerations, law, and social prejudices saw many marry locally. Social isolation and trading patterns also encouraged and facilitated the development of wide-ranging marriage networks, with the wealthy...
in particular arranging to marry amongst themselves in order to protect their household’s political and economic interests.

The abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups and other such developments of the early-Meiji years caused few immediate changes in social relations. Former ‘kawata’ status people did not suddenly become able to mingle with nobles and peasants because they had been accorded commoner status and equality before the courts. Despite the abolition of most formal social divisions, practices that had arisen in association with those divisions persisted.28 It was the case, however, that law no longer backed up customary practices involving the exclusion and ostracism of fellow Japanese subjects. The principle of legal equality between status groups explicitly denied the validity of such behaviour, and upon that basis, officials, journalists and ‘new commoner’ elites proclaimed that the formerly unremarkable practice of avoiding and denigrating people of ‘outcast’ status was henceforth unacceptable.

Marriage in a time of enlightenment

In the summer of 1872, the Finance Ministry issued an order forbidding practices such as using one’s household standing (kakaku 家格) to dominate others, denigrating people of households less venerable than one’s own, and citing one’s ancestors’ glorious achievements in the aim of gaining an ascendancy over others. Such actions, the ministry announced, were contrary to

the way of ‘popular harmony and relations’ (jinmin kyōwa kōsai 人民協和友愛).\(^{29}\)

Official calls for the development of friendly relations between all social strata were common during the early-Meiji period.

To cite a few examples that followed the decree abolishing the ‘outcast’ status groups, Okayama officials called for ‘new’ and ‘old’ commoners to join together and become ‘good people’; the Himeji authorities declared that all imperial subjects were the same; the Hyogo authorities that to maintain past status-based behaviour was insolent; the Mie authorities that harmony should prevail over past denigration and exclusion; the Tottori authorities that old ways should be discarded; the Hiroshima authorities that social friction was against the imperial will; and the Fukuoka authorities that equality was a return to natural principles of the past.\(^{30}\) Such pronouncements and legislation, along with more concrete activities such as the construction of railroads, the erection of street lamps and the promotion of meat-eating, were among the measures that underpinned the slogan, ‘civilization and enlightenment’ (bunmei kaika 文明開化), which was trumpeted by the literati and officialdom during the early-Meiji period.

During that first decade or so of the Meiji period, the intellectual and political elites began vigorously importing and propagating Western knowledge.

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\(^{29}\) Ōkurashō futatsu 大蔵省布達, 30/8/1872, in Unno Fukuju and Ōshima Mitsuko (eds.) 海野福寿・大島美津子編, Nihon kindai shisō taikei, vol. 20, le to mura 『日本近代思想大系 第20巻家と村』(東京：岩波書店, 1989), pp. 203-204 (hereafter le to mura). The practices denounced in this order were commonly used by pedigreed village elites of the Edo period in attempting to maintain their ascendancy over nouveaux riches upstarts and other peasants of lesser standing who desired to gain a larger say in village affairs. See Kitajima Masamoto 北島正元, Kinsei no minshū to toshi—bakuhansei kokka no kōzō 『近世の民衆と都市—幕藩制国家の構造』(東京：名著出版, 1984), p. 145.

\(^{30}\) Okayama ken kokuyu, probably late 1871 or early 1872; Himeji ken kokuyu, 12/10/1871; Hyōgo ken kokuyu, 02/1872; Mie ken kokuyu, 08/1872; Tottori ken kokuyu, 04/1872; Hiroshima ken kokuyu, 04/1872; Fukuoka ken kokuyu, 10/1872, in (respectively) KBSS: 1, pp. 411; 344-345; KBSS: 2, pp. 307-8; 207; 366-7; 504; 560.
that they thought would prove useful in constructing a modern and powerful state. In taking on the role of educators, these elites ascribed numerous undesirable qualities to the masses, whose lives and psychological world ‘were held to be worthless and barbaric, and denigrated as being diametrically opposed to the values of the age’.\(^{31}\) Portraying the abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups as an act symbolic of ‘civilization and enlightenment’, the intelligentsia attempted to demonstrate to the masses that denigrating people who used to be of ‘outcast’ status was an ‘errant way’ that ought to be abandoned.\(^{32}\) Some intellectuals attempted to capture the spirit of the new age by writing about marriages which, breaking with outmoded custom and misguided Bakufu law, joined former ‘outcasts’ and ‘new commoners’ to others.

In 1872, the Yūbin Höchi Shinbun published a brief story attributed to a foreign newspaper about a male Westerner (yōjin 洋人) in Kobe whose mistress had formerly been of ‘eta’ status.\(^{33}\) A Japanese friend suggests to the foreigner that this is a shame, for the woman is ‘lowly and unclean’. But the Westerner’s


\(^{33}\) Incidentally, the government had yet to allow marriages between Westerners and Japanese (Chinese people were an entirely different matter). The question of whether Japanese people were permitted to intermarry with foreigners arose in 1867, when the British Consul asked the Kanagawa magistrate if intermarriage was forbidden. Citing a lack of precedent, the magistrate referred the matter to the Bakufu. The government position was that such an act would require official permission. However, the Bakufu was deposed, and the Meiji government first introduced legislation on the matter in 1873. See Tōkyō Nichi Nichi Shinbun 『東京日々新聞』 18 March 1873. The first recorded marriage involving a Japanese woman and an English teacher took place the following August. See Yoshida Yatsuo 吉田八十, *Meiji kōshō jiten 『明治考証事典』* (東京: 新人物往来社, 1974), pp. 34-35. The first recorded marriage between a Japanese man and a foreign woman took place in Japan in 1874 between a young intellectual and a German woman who met while he was studying in Germany. See ‘Gaikoku josei to no kekkon dai ichigō 『外国女性との結婚第一号』’, in Kida Junichirō 紀田順一郎, *Meiji Nippon tenya wanya 『明治ニップポンてんやわんや』* (東京: 久保書店, 1965), pp. 147-148.
devastating riposte is that his partner is ‘much more beautiful’ (yohodo bi nari 余程美なり) than his interlocutor’s spouse. The author of this brief educational fable used the gaze of an Occidental to demonstrate the backwardness of the Japanese, and to indicate the kind of values that were to be encouraged in the Meiji period. Prejudices towards people formerly of ‘eta’ status were portrayed as aberrant, and the criterion of ‘beauty’ was proposed as the decisive consideration in male-female relations.

There are no recorded early-Meiji cases of people marrying ‘new commoners’ in order to demonstrate their level of enlightenment, or because they were entranced by striking beauty. A few fictional representations of ‘intermarriage’ associated with the civilization and enlightenment push emerged somewhat later. The most obvious example is Matsunoya Midori’s 1888 work, ‘Enlightened world, new commoner’ (‘Kaimei sekai shinheimin’ 関明世界新平民).

A complex story, the plot follows the personal advancement of two male ‘new commoners’, Nitta Taminosuke and Kusano Binji. Both are poor and

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34 Yūbin Höchi Shinbun 『郵便報知新聞』, 10/1 1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 25.
35 There are exceedingly few early (recorded) cases, with just the occasional mention, for example, that in Tochigi prefecture, despite continuing popular aversion towards former ‘outcasts’, ‘some people have recently gotten married’. ‘Tochigi ken ka yori no raisho ni iu’ 「栃木県下よりの来書に云」, Tōkyō Nichi Nichi Shinbun 『東京日々新聞』 , 24/5/1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 61. The nobleman and future politician Enomoto Takeaki apparently had an affair and a child with the daughter of his ‘hinin’ status jailor in the early 1870s, but limited contact with her after his pardon to financial support. See Arai Kōjirō 荒井貞三郎, ‘Enomoto Takeaki to Nerima burakumin’ 「根本武揚と練馬部落民」, in Ishii Ryōsuke (ed.) 石井良助編, Kinsei Kantō no hisabetsu buraku 『近世関東の被差別部落』 (東京: 明石書店, 1978), pp. 514-516. Much later, the Jogaku Zasshi (7 December 1889) reported that Nakae Chōmin had married a ‘new commoner’, but that rumour was incorrect. See Asukai Masamichi 飛鳥井雅道, Nakae Chōmin 『中江兆民』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 1999), pp. 183-184.
36 Matsunoya Midori 松の家みどり, ‘Kaimei sekai shinheimin’ 「関明世界新平民」, 1888, in MBSS: 1, pp. 1-144. Matsunoya (Matsuki Tadanori) was a school teacher in Nagano prefecture’s Matsuyu city. He is thought to have based the main character upon a local youth.
37 Under the influence of works such as those of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Samuel Smiles, novels of personal advancement constituted a minor literary genre of the early-to-mid-Meiji period. See Maeda Ai 前田愛, ‘Meiji risshin shusse shugi no keifu—Saikoku risshihen’ kara “Kishō”
unlearned rural children. Benefactors appear and send them off to school. Excelling academically, Nitta is taken to England by a friendly English merchant to learn the textile trade. After commercial success there, and then in New York, he begins his own textile business in Yokohama. Meanwhile, Kusano Binji has become assistant branch manager of a bank, and is adopted by the manager. He is disowned following a clumsy blackmail attempt to marry the daughter of a wealthy client, but through a series of astonishing revelations, this client’s daughter turns out, in fact, to be his own long-lost sister, who ends up marrying Nitta Taminosuke. Kusano ultimately marries his former adoptive father’s long-lost daughter, who also surfaces towards the story’s end.

In this story of enlightenment and personal advancement, ‘new commoner’ origins merely signify a disadvantaged starting position in life. The function of humble beginnings is to render subsequent advancement through diligent study and hard work all the more meritorious. Matsunoya denied customary prejudices any validity in his work, or rather, he omitted them altogether. His characters did not see former ‘eta’ status to be a factor that determined human worth, and it was certainly not an issue in determining marriage partners. Progress and capital accumulation were the keystones of this particular ‘enlightened world’.

In 1894, the eminent socialist intellectual Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) also wrote on the theme of intermarriage, in a story entitled ‘Okoso zukin’ (‘おこそ頭巾’ ‘Hood and veil’). Shūsui’s story featured a man who discovered that he...
was of 'new commoner descent', just before his marriage to a 'regular' commoner. The hero declares that he has nothing against letting his provenance be known. 'Psychologically and physically, I am an equal human being. Noble or commoner, there is no high or low; new commoner is quite all right with me' (p. 103). When his father refers to old customs and the probable ostracism awaiting him, he declares, 'There is no need to surrender to irrational denigration' (p. 105). Father and son both fear that the wife-to-be would suffer if the marriage went ahead, but upon being consulted, her family suggests that they bring forward the marriage. In the end, the two marry with the support of both families; 'new commonerhood' is again disposed of as something relatively minor, which could be overcome by a modicum of education and enlightenment.

The appearance of these fictional works in the mid-Meiji years suggests that people who held such attitudes might well have existed in real life too. But these stories did not reflect the realities of the time, in so far as the ideas expressed within them are not visible in accounts of popular practice. For one thing, people were reluctant to attract community sanctions through engagement in such enlightened behaviour.

The writer Miyatake Gaikotsu (1863-1955) gave a brief account of how old ways prevented people from crossing former status boundaries. In his native Kochi prefecture village in the 1880s, Miyatake recalled, there lived a beautiful girl who would have had no end of suitors but for the fact that she had been born in a 'new commoner' community. The local men, including Miyatake himself,
gazed at and desired her, but would not approach, 'for fear of local sanctions, and because they were afflicted by outmoded thinking' (kyūhei shisō 旧弊思想).40

Recorded accounts of real-life relations across defunct status lines are few. Limited to a few media reports that concern sensational cases of rupture and tragedy, they are probably not altogether reliable. Nonetheless, they may give a sense of the social situation during the early-to-mid-Meiji years.

In one case reported in 1873, Toshikichi, a 'new commoner' of Akumo district in Nagano prefecture, had married the street-vendor Matsu. He at first hid his 'origins', fearing that she might reject him on their account. After a time, he revealed his former status to her. Matsu did not leave him, and their lives continued on together. But then her family became aware of his former legal status, and forced them to separate.41 Avoiding 'eta' status people was a custom of long standing, noted the anonymous journalist, and obviously it still held sway.42

During October of 1879, the Aichi Shinbun published a series of articles on a case in which personal sentiment similarly came up against custom-based family opposition. Okiku, daughter of a wealthy peasant, one day became ensnared by a band of males. Rescued by the handsome 'new commoner' youth Asaemon, friendly relations between the pair developed rapidly. His family—

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40 Miyatake Gaikotsu 宮武外骨, 'Shinheimin no musume'「新平民の娘」, Omoshiro han bun 『面白半分』, 1917, in KBSS: 6, pp. 463-465. A prolific writer, Miyatake adopted the cause of 'buraku' liberation and announced publicly that he was of 'eta' descent. This caused something of a literary stir and family outrage, since in real life he was the son of wealthy and respectable landowners. Morooka Sukeyuki 坂岡佑行, 'Miyatake Gaikotsu to "eta" no go'「宮武外骨と『織多』の語」, in Koperu Henshūbu (ed.) コペル編集部編, Buraku no kako / genzai / soshite ... 『部落の過去・現在・そして...』 (京都: 阿吽社, 1991), pp. 189-193.

41 Until the new Civil Code came into force in 1898, household councils had the legal authority to dissolve marriages without heeding the wishes of the married couple. Tamaki Hajime 玉城泰, Nihon kazoku seido hihan 『日本家族制度批判』(東京: 福田書房, 1934), pp. 105-109.

42 'Shinmin hōka' 「新民放火」, Shinbi Shinbun 『信飛新聞』, October 1873, in KBSS: 2, pp. 184-185. Ired by her family's intervention, Toshikichi allegedly set fire to her family home, and was arrested for arson.
also one of considerable wealth—proposed that the couple might marry. But her parents were outraged by the suggestion that they might give their daughter to a ‘new commoner’, however prosperous. Their reaction in turn angered Asaemon’s parents. The upshot was that the young couple eloped to Tokyo, only to return due to lack of funds, whereupon they attempted a love suicide. The police intervened and tried to convince the pair to separate, but to no avail. At the time of the last report, the two had vanished again, leaving no news of their fate.

This story’s newsworthiness derived in large part from its resemblances to well-known tales of ill-fated unions between couples of different backgrounds. The tale of the nobleman Genzaburō and the ‘outcast’ girl Okoyo was one of the more celebrated stories of this genre. Popular in the late-Edo period, A.B. Mitford rendered one version into English as ‘The Eta maiden and the Hatamoto’. The different versions of this story, which is set in the late-sixteenth century, are distinguished by the degrees of tragedy in their endings. The basic theme is that a young nobleman, Genzaburō, becomes enamoured of Okoyo, an ‘eta’ or sometimes ‘hinin’ status singing girl. The affair becomes public, and in punishment for his crime, Genzaburō is banished, his estate confiscated, and his family line abolished. Okoyo and her father are also punished.

45 Edo-period legal precedents indicate that Genzaburō would have been demoted to ‘hinin’ status. Hirano Yoshihisa 平野栄久, ‘Taishū bungei no isō yori mita sabetsu—Bakumatsu kara “Hakai” made’ 大衆文芸の位相より見た差別—幕末から『破戒』まで, in Umesawa Toshihiko et al. 梅沢利彦ほか著, Bungaku no naka no hisabetsu burakuzō, senzen hen 『文学の中の被差別階層像 戦前篇』 (東京: 明石書店, 1980), p. 29. The pair met a happier ending in Kawadake Mokuami’s Kabuki version. Kawadake had Okoyo turn out to be the abandoned child of people of bushi status, abandoned at birth and raised by ‘hinin’ status people. This revelation
The popularity of the stories of Genzaburō and Okoyo, and of Okiku and Asaemon, suggests that there was considerable vicarious interest in transgressive unions, and no doubt also some sympathy for such ill-fated lovers. But even so, it appears that people were unwilling to engage in or endorse such relationships in their everyday lives. Although legal equality had given rise to new opportunities for more extensive social relations, many people responded to approaches from ‘new commoners’ during the 1870s and 1880s by carefully excluding them from social intercourse. Matsuura Kunihiro suggests that marriage was the social domain in which this tendency was most apparent. Rejections of equality and of the attendant possibilities for new social relations were, as Haga Noboru has said, based on the ‘logic of everyday life’, or on customary everyday practices which, at least to begin with, were naturally more powerful than decrees, proclamations, and educational texts.

However, apart from enabling ‘new commoners’ to sue in the courts for the right to be served in public establishments such as barber shops, bathhouses of shared status allows the two to marry. See Kitagawa Tetsuo 北川鉄夫, Buraku mondai wo toriageta hyaku no shōsetsu 『部落問題をとりあげた百の小説』(京都: 部落問題研究所, 1985), pp. 16-20.


47 Shiomi, Sabetsugo to kindai sabetsu, p. 82. From another perspective, of myriad daily contacts, those involving rejections of social relations surfaced as ‘discrimination’. Tsukada Takashi 塚田孝, Mibunsei shakai to shimin shakai—kinsei Nihon no shakai to chitsujo 『身分制社会と市民社会―近代日本の社会と秩序』(東京: 柏書房, 1992), pp. 269-270. Such rejections obviously cannot be taken to have been universal.


and restaurants, the legislation of legal equality made it more difficult for people to reject relations with ‘new commoners’ on purely ‘discriminatory’ grounds. The 1881 case of Yoshinosuke and Oshima of Aichi prefecture in central Japan demonstrated this point. Two articles published in the Kanpō Zasshi related their story. Referring to popular tales of unions between people of disparate social positions, the first report began with the statement that this couple ‘demonstrated the old adage that in love, there are no considerations of high and low’. Oshima’s brother Saigorō had proscribed their relationship—probably their father was dead, with Saigorō positioned as the household patriarch—because Yoshinosuke was a ‘new commoner’. In defiance, the pair cohabited secretly, but Saigorō found out and forced them apart. Yoshinosuke’s workmates then became involved in the affair, attempting to act as go-betweens to bring about their marriage. The journalist concluded with the observation that their intervention, combined with the legal equality of ‘new commoners’, made it difficult for Saigorō to refuse the offer of marriage. Although we do not know how the affair ended, there was clearly a degree of tension at an everyday level between the principle of equality and custom-based practices involving the avoidance of ‘new commoners’.

There were also occasional signs that popular concerns about former social barriers were weakening. A Kochi prefecture newspaper, the Doyō Shinbun, printed a report on a divorce case involving ‘new commoners’ in 1884. In a certain local district, a commoner named Kiyoji had learnt that a nearby ‘new commoner’ named Mitarō desired to acquire a horse. Being friendly with a

50 For a few such cases, see Niigata Shinbun 『新潟新聞』. 28 March 1879, in KBSS: 3, pp. 123-124; Aichi Shinbun 『愛知新聞』. 29 April 1879, in KBSS: 3, p. 146; Shinonome Shinbun 『東雲新聞』. 20 December 1888, in KBSS: 3, p. 146.

51 Kanpō Zasshi 『官報雑誌』. 6 and 7 April 1881, in KBSS: 3, p. 151.
horse breeder, Kiyoji visited Mitarō with this breeder and a horse. ‘Mitarō was delighted, and clapping his hands, offered beef and sake in thanks’. The two horse traders greatly appreciated his hospitality, and the three ate and drank merrily. This mutually profitable socializing was rendered newsworthy because Kiyoji’s brother-in-law, Sennosuke, became aware of it, and was enraged. ‘I cannot have the sister of a man who shares the hearth of an eta and even drinks with their kind as my wife’, he is reported to have said. Writing a brief statement of divorce, Sennosuke threw her out of their home. Neighbours and acquaintances were said to have attempted to persuade him to revoke this statement, but to no avail.

As the article’s title suggests (‘Outmoded discrimination’), the Doyō newspaper is highly critical of Sennosuke. This is unsurprising, for its editor was Ueki Emori (1857-1892), the well-known advocate of popular rights associated with the Liberal Party. And the interaction between Kiyoji, the horse breeder and Mitarō, as well as the fact that people tried to convince Sennosuke to revoke his decision, both suggest that prejudices against ‘new commoners’ were by no means universally shared.

The making of a hereditary type

Despite media criticism of ‘errant ways’ and occasional instances of ‘new’ and ‘old’ commoners developing friendly relations, it appears that ‘new
commoners' generally continued to be subjected to denigration or avoidance during the 1870s and 1880s. Intellectuals who set out to examine and explain this phenomenon commonly turned to Western science. Their actions were related to the fact that the early-Meiji time of 'civilization and enlightenment' had not just been when Japanese elites adopted and propagated ideas such as equality and fraternity, but was also when scholars introduced Western scientific learning, including theories of evolution, heredity, genetics and racial hierarchy, into the Japanese intellectual sphere.\(^56\)

Ideas of social evolution and survival of the fittest and so forth spread rapidly through intellectual circles, in part because they provided a convincing account of common and longstanding practices such as the improvement of crop strains.\(^57\) After their introduction, such notions were adapted to provide explanations for a wide range of phenomena.\(^58\) For instance, male intellectuals attempted to justify male domination over women on the grounds that women obviously had a different genetic make-up to men, as their various bodily particularities proved.\(^59\) People likewise attempted to scientifically explain

\(^{56}\) Edward Morse (1838-1925), professor of zoology in the Faculty of Biology and Science at Tokyo Imperial University, introduced his own interpretation of evolutionary theory in 1877. According to his recollections, professors, their wives, and around five or six hundred students attended and took notes. Edward S. Morse, Japan day by day, 1877, 1878-79, 1882-83, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1917), pp. 339-340. John Thomas Gulick (1832-1923), a missionary and naturalist who like Morse was a specialist on shellfish, delivered similar lectures at the Dōshisha academy in Kyoto. See Fujino Yutaka 藤野豊, 'Hisabetsu buraku' 「被差別部落」, in Asao Naohiro et al. (eds.) 朝尾直弘ほか編, Iwanaami kōza Nihon tsūshi, vol. 18『岩波講座日本通史 第18巻』 (東京：岩波書店, 1994), p. 140.


\(^{59}\) Ueno Chizuko 上野千鶴子, 'Nihongata kindai kazoku no tanjō' 「日本型近代家族の誕生」, in Ogi Shinzō et al. (eds.) 小木新造ほか編, Nihon kindai shisō taikei, vol. 23, Fūzoku i sei 『日本近代思想大系 第23巻 風俗・性』 (東京：岩波書店, 1990), pp. 537-538 (hereafter Fūzoku i sei).
prejudices against ‘new commoners’ with special reference to putative hereditary attributes. Presumably, their attempts were related to the fact that there had been a scholarly tendency to consider ‘eta’ status people a type of ‘lineage group’ since the mid-Edo period (see chapter three for more on this point).\(^{60}\)

The establishment of the notion that ‘new commoners’ were people formerly of ‘eta’ status who were separated from others by a hereditary quality emerged clearly from a 1902 divorce case. In December 1902, the Nagoya Chunichi Shinbun reported on a woman plaintiff who had filed a petition for divorce based on two interconnected factors. She declared that she had married the man who was her husband because of his assertion that he was of ‘good stock’ and from a ‘venerable and wealthy peasant household’ (kettō tadashiki kyūke gōnō 血統正しき旧家豪農). Because he was later revealed to be a poor ‘new commoner’, she argued that his prior statements constituted fraudulent misrepresentation, and thus were grounds for divorce. An Okayama regional court agreed with her claim.\(^{61}\) Her former husband thereupon appealed against that decision to the Hiroshima Court of Appeals. But determining that ‘he hid his origins as a former eta and pretended to be of illustrious and wealthy family’, the appeals court upheld the original judgment.\(^{62}\)

The fact that judges had fashioned a theory of a hereditary or permanent ‘eta’ nature aroused considerable interest in legal circles. In a letter published in the Law Newspaper in March 1903, one writer criticized judges for assuming that if the woman had prior knowledge of her former husband’s ‘descent’, she

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\(^{60}\) Asao Naohiro 朝尾直弘, Toshi to kinsei shakai wo kangaeru—Nobunaga / Hideyoshi kara Tsunayoshi no jidai made 『都市と近世社会を考える—信長・秀吉から綱吉の時代まで』 (東京: 朝日新聞社, 1995), p. 324.

\(^{61}\) ‘Daiji no teishu ha eta’ 『大事の亭主は稼多』, Chunichi Shinbun 『中日新聞』, 20 December 1902, in KBSS: 4, pp. 275-276.

\(^{62}\) ‘Konin torikeshi seikyū kōso jiken’ 『婚姻取消請求控訴事件』, Hōritsu Shinbun 『法律新聞』, 16 March 1903, in KBSS: 4, pp. 278-279.
would automatically have excluded him from consideration as a marriage partner.\textsuperscript{63}

Another legal scholar named Takahashi Shūichi also attacked this judgment in an article published in the same review. He was of the opinion that ‘eta’ were ‘one of the lowliest breeds’ (\textit{shuzoku} 種族), and that it was normal for people not to mix with them. Had the man’s ancestry been known beforehand, Takahashi surmised, his proposal of marriage would probably have been rejected out of hand. Quite apart from that, it would certainly have constituted fraud if the marriage had been agreed to solely on the basis that the male appellant had claimed to be rich. These points aside, in his opinion, the judges had erred on a very significant count. ‘Eta’ was an occupational name (\textit{shokumei} 職名), Takahashi argued. But the courts had decided that someone born into a household formerly of ‘eta’ status, and who then suppressed that ‘fact’ and instead said that they were from a ‘venerable household’ and of ‘good stock’, committed fraud. As Takahashi pointed out, this distinguished ‘eta’ status people from their occupations (not to mention it ignored the fact that ‘eta’ was a redundant and pejorative status appellation), and developed the idea that there existed an ‘eta bloodline’ (\textit{eta sei no kettō} 血統の血統).\textsuperscript{64}

Incidentally, the Justice Ministry official Kumano Binzō (1854-1899) had treated precisely this issue in 1888, in his explanatory notes on the draft Civil Code’s marriage section (drafted by Kumano). Article 94 of the draft Civil Code was to give those who contracted marriage as a result of misapprehension or fraud the right to personally request the annulment of their union in court.

\textsuperscript{63} Byōdō dōjin 平等道人, ‘Moto eta ni taisuru konin torikeshi jiken’ [旧穢多に対する婚姻取消事件], \textit{Hōritsu Shinbun 『法律新聞』}, 23 March 1903, in \textit{KBSS}: 4, pp. 449-450.

\textsuperscript{64} Takahashi Shūichi 高橋修一, ‘Eta hōritsu ron’ [穢多法律論], \textit{Hōritsu Shinbun 『法律新聞』}, 30 March 1903, in \textit{KBSS}: 4, pp. 450-451.
Kumano had proposed that damage or loss ensuing from the union should be taken as the decisive factor in determining whether or not a legally fraudulent marriage had been contracted. Such fraud could involve deceit over the situation of relatives or self, including misrepresentation of influence or wealth. But despite observing that ‘in our country, it is normal to select marriage partners based on bloodlines’, he argued against allowing the use of bloodlines as a grounds for divorce. Making explicit reference to marriages contracted with people from former ‘eta’ status households and disease-afflicted households who did not disclose such ‘facts’, Kumano reasoned that since all had commoner status and equal rights before the law, ‘naturally one cannot apply for the annulment of marriages upon such grounds’.65

The draft Civil Code, and especially the section drafted by Kumano Binzō on family and household matters, displeased such influential figures as Hozumi Yatsuka, who denounced its failure to give adequate weighting to longstanding Japanese customs.66 The violent debates that greeted the prospect of its implementation saw it first delayed, and then replaced by a new draft. Kumano Binzō’s legal career went into decline, and the judges who determined former ‘eta’ status to be a hereditary condition that ‘sufferers’ were legally required to disclose prior to contracting marriage obviously did not share his conviction that the term ‘eta’ was no more than the occupational name of a defunct status group.

66 The best-known attack was made by Hozumi Yatsuka 穂積八束, in his ‘Minpō idete chūkō horobu’「民法出でて忠孝亡ぶ」, Hōgaku Shinpō 『法学新報』, August 1891, in le to mura, pp. 391-394.
The rise of the notion that ‘former eta’ were equivalent to ‘new commoners’ and constituted a defective ‘breed’ was closely related to the state campaign to bring about a ‘rich country’ with a ‘strong military’ (*fukoku kyōhei* 富国強兵), as the slogan that superseded ‘civilization and enlightenment’ during the 1880s put it. During the course of this campaign, ‘new commoners’ were posited as a group whose attributes meant that they posed a threat to public health and morality, and thus who threatened to undermine state power on the one hand, and people’s household fortunes on another.

Improving population health to raise productivity and amplify state power is one of the primary concerns of modern states. Although eugenics (*yūseigaku* 優生学) as a scientific discipline may not have been introduced into Japan until the end of the Meiji period,68 the rulers of Meiji Japan had a strong interest in eugenicist thinking, or in fostering healthy bodies that would man the military and labour productively to enrich the country.69

The leaders of the semi-official Greater Japan Private Hygiene Association (*Dai Nihon Shiritsu Eiseikai* 大日私立衛生会) made explicit the connection between state interests and individual health. At this body’s inaugural assembly in 1883, its president and the future head of the Japanese Red Cross, Sano Tsunetami (1822-1902), declared that ‘the health of each of us is related to whether our country shall be strong or weak, rich or poor’. Another executive,

67 ‘Civilization and enlightenment’ was the catchphrase of the 1870s and early 1880s; the slogan ‘rich country, strong military’ replaced it. Yokoyama Gennosuke 横山源之助, ‘Meiji fugō shi’ 明治富豪史, in *Yokoyama Gennosuke zenshū*, vol. 3 『横山源之助全集 第3巻』(東京: 明治文献, 1974), p. 345.

68 See Noma Shinjirō 野間伸次, ‘‘Kenzen” naru dai Nihon teikoku—kokumin yūseihō seitō wo megutte’ ‘『健全』なる大日本帝國—国民優生法制定をめぐって’, *Hisutoria 『ヒストリア』*, vol. 120, September 1988, pp. 44-45. The influence of that science is said to have been limited to academia to begin with, spreading more widely only during the 1920s with the incorporation of notions of eugenics into family planning and women’s liberation movements.

the medical doctor Hasegawa Yasushi (1842-1912), pronounced that the association’s aim was to ‘make the nation healthy, foster the strength that is the font of capital, [...] and thereby increase militarization’. In short, this body’s purpose was to improve the national corps and to heighten people’s value as labour and military power.70

Intellectuals debated precisely how the state might realize the goal of improving its human resources. Based on notions of a racial hierarchy topped by ‘Westerners’, holders of one extreme view proposed that Japanese people should breed with Western people. ‘The physiques and minds of Japanese are inferior to Westerners’, one writer argued, going on to propose that ‘we should import [Western] women and promote meat-eating to further improve our race’.71

That particular idea proved contentious, with the pre-eminent conservative intellectual Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916), among others, pointing out in 1887 that if Western genes were racially superior and genetically dominant, then rather than improving the Japanese race, intermarriage would lead logically and unacceptably to its eventual replacement and disappearance.72 Partly as a result of such criticisms, Japanese scholars ‘tended to emphasize environmental

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70 See Hirota Masaki ひろたまさき, ‘Nihon kindai shakai no sabetsu kōzō’ 「日本近代社会の差別構造」, in SNS, pp. 499-500. Quotes from Sano and Hasegawa are reproduced on pp. 499-500. For more on this association, see chapter six.


elements over genetics’, and devised more practical plans to improve the population by reforming and improving popular lifestyles.  

People who looked at ways to reform popular lifestyles from the perspectives of national health and state power turned some of their attention to ‘inbreeding’ (kinshin kekkon 近親結婚 / kinshin engumi 近親縁組). Such practices were seen to be widespread, posing a serious problem in that they gave rise to disease and deformity and ultimately would bring about ‘racial decline’ (jinshu no suijaku 人種の衰弱). In light of these unwanted effects, intellectuals and officials called on people to desist from those practices.

There had been occasional attacks on ‘inbreeding’ during the early-Meiji years. In 1875, for example, Minoura Katsundo (1854-1929), a student of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s, bemoaned the fact that ‘incestuous alliances’ (kinshin engumi 近親縁組) among the aristocracy were causing members to degenerate. But growing out of a more general concern with ‘racial improvement’ (jinshu kairyō 人種改良) among the socio-political elites, the concern with inbreeding that emerged in the latter part of the Meiji period was much broader in its focus,

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73 Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, ‘Kokumin no tanjō to “Nihon jinshu” 部民の誕生と『日本人種』’, Shisō 『思想』, vol. 845, November 1994, p. 46.
74 Kumano Binzō 木間信三 used this expression in explaining why the draft civil code was to ban marriages between close relatives. Kumano, Minpō shōan, pp. 314-315.
75 Minoura Katsundo 美濃武通, ‘Kinshin engumi no daigai wo ronzu 近親縁組の大害を論ず’, Minkan Zasshi 『民間雑誌』, February 1875, in Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.) 吉野作造編, Meiji bunka zenshū, vol. 18, Shinbun hen 『明治文化全集 第18巻 新聞篇』 (東京: 日本評論社, 1928), pp. 309-310. Some dissented from the view that this particular form of inbreeding was bad, arguing on the contrary that it was necessary to maintain the purity of aristocratic bloodlines. See Suzuki Zenji 鈴木善次, Nihon no yaseigakure—sono shisō to unō no rekishi 『日本の優生學—その思想と運動の歴史』 (東京: 三共出版, 1983), pp. 57-58. This notion was incorporated, as we shall see below, into laws concerning royal and aristocratic marriages.
and it was to be given legal grounding by the 1898 Civil Code, which prohibited marriages between close relatives.\(^76\)

One noteworthy aspect of the mid-to-late-Meiji anti-inbreeding campaign was that writers alleged that practice was prevalent among ‘new commoners’.\(^77\) Their claims were perhaps partly intended to discourage the population from inbreeding practices, as presumably the threat of becoming alike to ‘new commoners’ constituted a powerful disincentive. And as Nakagawa Kiyoko points out, another reason for such claims was the fact that discrimination limited the marriage pool of ‘new commoners’ and promoted community endogamy. But in reality, however, she suggests the proportion of marriages with close relatives was rather low in comparison to that among landowners, for instance.\(^78\) To target ‘new commoners’ in particular was to ignore the fact that marriage relations between close relatives were not at all uncommon among the population generally.\(^79\)

Disregarding these considerations, some intellectuals determined that prejudices against ‘new commoners’ resulted from the fact that they practiced inbreeding. According to the Kyoto educator Shibashi Toranosuke, ‘new commoners’ manifested a variety of defects. Externally, he problematized their

\(^{76}\) Inoue Michiyasu 井上通泰, ‘Ketsuzoku kekkon no heigai’ 『血族結婚の弊害』, Jogaku Zasshi 『教科雑誌』, vol. 494, 25 August 1899, pp. 11-13. An optometrist, Inoue (1866-1941) was also known as a scholar of ancient Japanese literature, and as Yanagita Kunio’s elder brother.


speech, looks, occupations, and eyes (presumably referring in the last instance to trachoma). Psychologically, he criticized them for being old-fashioned and anti-social with no sense of enterprise. In his opinion, these features were the consequences of the fact that ‘marriages are limited to people of their own breed’ (shuzoku 種族)\(^8^0\).

‘New commoner’ inbreeding was also held responsible for specific conditions. Mori Teijirō, a Kyushu University lecturer in ancient Japanese history, argued that as a result of unhygienic living conditions and incestuous marriages within village communities (sonnai kinshin kekkon 村内近親結婚), ‘eta’ (as well as beggars) were hereditarily afflicted by ‘lepropus bloodlines’ (raibyo no kettō ライ病の血統)\(^8^1\). In the same vein, the novelist Shimazaki Tōson surmised of ‘new commoners’ that ‘perhaps a skin disease is endemic amongst them […] because some of them practice extreme lineage-group endogamy’ (dōzoku kekkon 同族結婚)\(^8^2\).

Tokushima prefecture officials even drew up a ‘buraku’ reform report in 1910 in which they found the fact that there were no leprosy sufferers in one community unusual enough to require explanation. Specialists, they wrote, held that leprosy was prevalent among such people ‘as a result of inbreeding’. Whether its absence from the community in question reflected their rude health

\(^{8^0}\) Shibashi Toranosuke 市橋虎之介, ‘Shinheimin kyūji no saku ikani’ [新平民救治の策如何], Kyōto Kyōikukai Zasshi 京都教育会雑誌, vol. 17, April 1887, in KNBS: 6, pp. 511-512.


\(^{8^2}\) Shimazaki Tōson 島崎藤村, ‘Yamaguni no shinheimin’ [山国の新平民], 1906, in Tōson zenshū 藤村全集, vol. 6 『藤村全集 第 6 巻』 (東京: 篤摩書房, 1967), p. 82.
and superior physiques or some other factor was, they deemed, 'suitable material for a specialist study'.

Many who engaged in such ‘specialist’ studies saw delirious visions. Sakamoto Ushigo explained in 1889 that ‘eta’ were the descendants of long-ago refugees from famine and disorder on the Chinese continent. After immigrating, their diet had consisted ‘almost exclusively of foul rotten things’, he claimed, ultimately causing mutations in their bodily organs. The prominent social reformer Tomeoka Kōsuke saw similar hallucinations, declaring in 1909 that since many ‘new commoner’ households had twins, ‘they might have different reproductive organs’. He was not entirely sure about this, and suggested that ‘whether abnormalities in their reproductive organs arose as a consequence of leading different lifestyles over lengthy durations [...] is a question that requires study.’

Allegations of moral depravity accompanied these claims of physical deformity and disease. In 1899, Yokoyama Gennosuke (1870-1915), the well-known scholar of working-class life, wrote in the prestigious journal Taiyō, ‘in [‘new commoner’] society, by the time girls and boys attain the age of thirteen or fourteen, they already know the facts of life, and quickly have [sexual] relations by the time they are fifteen or sixteen. Children who would still be playing with dolls in ordinary society are already fine wives’.

84 Sakamoto Ushigo 坂本丑吾, ‘Shinheimin shogun ni nozomu’「新平民諸君に望む」, Doyō Shinbun 『土陽新聞』, 21 September 1889, in KBSS: 3, pp. 569-570.
86 Yokoyama Gennosuke 横山源之助, ‘Shinheimin shakai no jōtai’ 「新平民社会の状態」, Taiyō 『大陽』, vol. 5, no. 22, October 1899, in KBSS: 4, p. 87. It is odd that Yokoyama found them wanting with reference to new ‘upper class’ values of chastity and virginity. While this may simply reflect the values of the audience he was writing for, and his wish to titillate them, it also
Ohara Shinzō (1873-1953), an official who played a part in Nara prefecture ‘buraku’ reform projects, also wrote at some length on the theme of immorality. 87 Quoting an article that had been published in Kyoto’s Hinode Shinbun in February 1909, he wrote that corrupt ‘new commoner’ morals caused youths to become sexually active at a young age, while illicit love affairs and adultery were rampant. Moreover, ‘despite the fact that there are many endogamous marriages’, Ohara claimed that ‘the reproductive power of this breed is extremely great, and they are unlike the Ainu of Hokkaido or the Taiwan Aborigines who are gradually decreasing in number as a result of oppression.’ 88

Different to ordinary Japanese and to the ‘inferior’ races that were dying out in the Darwinian struggle for survival, Ohara considered that ‘buraku’ residents constituted a backward race that was paradoxically prone to breed and multiply. 89

Writers of fictional works also dealt with the prejudiced notion that ‘new commoners’ were immoral people amongst whom sexual relations were

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87 Ohara was born in Tokyo and studied law at Tokyo University before becoming a bureaucrat. He engaged in ‘buraku’ reform projects in Nara prefecture as head of the prefectoral government’s Interior Section, and after a stint in the colonial government of Korea, became governor of Wakayama prefecture from 1920 to 1923, and thereafter governor of Niigata prefecture.


89 The notion that ‘new commoners’ possessed remarkable ‘breeding power’ spread in the late-Meiji period, and was ‘confirmed’ by the Interior Ministry, which announced that the ‘new commoner’ population had grown from some 380,000 at the time of abolition in 1871 to some 800,000 in 1910. The results of this survey were published in the journal Jincō in 1911 with the comment that the figures were ‘cause for astonishment’. ‘Tokushu buraku to sono jinkō’ 「特殊部落と其人口」, Jincō 『人道』, vol. 69, January 1911, in KBSS: 5, pp. 32-33. Revisions to population statistics suggest that one’s astonishment should be restrained. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the ‘new commoner’ population of the early-Meiji period was probably more than 520,000, and this 1911 figure certainly includes numerous new arrivals.
'debauched and wild'. 90 The 'buraku' rights campaigner Maeda Sanyū referred to this preconception in his 1903 work, 'A single flower', in which a girl and a former military class police officer are married. Despite learning of his wife's 'buraku origins', the officer stays with her. But unable to rid himself of the notion that she is being unfaithful to him, which arises from his prejudiced belief that 'burakumin' are immoral, he ends up killing a friend for imagined infidelities with her. 91 More sensationally, brother-sister incest was the theme of the 1896 short story 'Neoshiroi' ('Make-up before going to bed') by Oguri Fūyō (1875-1926), which featured two 'former eta' siblings who abandoned hope of marriage with 'ordinary' people as a result of discrimination. Refusing to marry among their own 'kind' to prevent offspring from facing discrimination, they end up finding physical solace with each other, and the sister's ensuing pregnancy arouses much local gossip. 92

Other popular works used related themes. 'Lute Song', a successful 1905 piece by the writer of popular and children's fiction, Ōkuro Tōrō (1879-1944), depicted the tragic 'buraku' heroine as an unwilling seductress who caused sexual frenzy in men. 93 The popularity of 'Lute Song' saw the publication in

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90 Hirano, 'Taishū bungei no isō', pp. 73-74.
92 Oguri Fūyō 小栗風薫, 'Neoshiroi' 「寝白粉」, 1903, in Itō Sei (ed.) 伊藤整編, Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 65, Oguri Fūyō shū 『明治文學全集 第65巻 小栗風薫集』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1968), pp. 151-159. Fūyō has been criticized for being solely concerned with the idea of incest, and for paying no heed to 'buraku' matters. See Tsukagoe Kazuo 塚越和夫, 'Kenyūsha—Hirotsu Ryūrō wo chūshin ni 「親友社—広津柳郎を中心に」, in Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō Kankōkai (ed.) 日本文学研究資料刊行會編, Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō sōsho—Meiji no bungaku 『日本文學研究資料叢書—明治的文學』 (東京: 有精堂, 1981), p. 216. Whatever Fūyō's intent, it is clear his work encouraged the association of sexual deviance with 'new commoners'.
93 Ōkura Tōrō 大倉桃郎, 'Biwauta' 「琵琶歌」, in Senuma Shigeki (ed.) 豊沼茂樹編, Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 93, Meiji katei shōsetsu shū 『明治文學全集 第93巻 明治家庭小説集』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1969), pp. 365-417. 'Lute song' was later dramatized. 'Although it was a conventional family drama without any novelty of content or form, it was a play whose base and
1912 of a lesser-known follow-up work entitled ‘New Lute Song’, by Hayakawa Hokutei, in which the heroine was again a young ‘buraku’ girl who suffers a succession of tragedies, being drugged, raped, prostituted and betrayed.  

These representations of morally and physically defective ‘others’ may reveal something of the unconscious desires of their inventors. They also assisted in the construction of a set of respectable mores and practices for the ‘mainstream’ population to adopt. Proper Japanese subjects were to be capable of holding their passions in check, and take care with their personal lifestyle, and in particular with their sexual practices. Implicitly, it was preferable that they avoid intermarriage and procreative activities with defective parts of the population, so as to avoid damaging the national corps. With regard to the role of such suggestions, one can speculate (although hardly prove) that they affected popular marriage practices to the extent that they meshed with household concerns.

**Household considerations**

When early-Meiji elites began introducing notions of equality and national community and so forth in the late 1860s and 1870s, they pitted those ideas against well-entrenched popular customs and beliefs. Their efforts saw a brief florescence of ‘enlightenment’, at least in intellectual circles. But as scientific ideas related to the aim of ‘racial’ improvement became influential from the second decade of the Meiji period onwards, intellectuals discovered that

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unoriginal sentiments were sufficient to bring audiences to tears.’ Akisada Tarō 秋庭太郎, Tōto Meiji engeki shi 『東都明治演劇史』 (東京: 鳳出版, 1975), p. 533.


95 In the European case too, Mosse points out that ‘others’ were characterized by a ‘lack of control over their passions’. George L. Mosse, Nationalism and sexuality. Respectability and abnormal sexuality in modern Europe (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), p. 134.
myriad defects distinguished ‘new commoners’ from others. Their findings provided people with new reasons for avoiding such people not just in marriage, but also in social and economic relations generally. Modern intellectual inquiry suggested that prejudices that during the early-Meiji period had temporarily been labelled ‘errant ways’ were in fact reasonable, scientifically founded, and even desirable practices.

Published in newspapers and journals or announced at public lectures, the views of the journalists, officials, and intellectuals who invented scientific explanations about why a part of the population should suffer from popular discrimination were transmitted widely. Fujino Yutaka has argued that precisely because the intelligentsia incessantly represented ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ as morally and genetically defective types, people came to perceive intermarriage with them to be undesirable.96

But, as Kurokawa Midori observes, it is unlikely that people set about avoiding intermarriage with ‘new commoners’ simply in order to ensure that offspring got the best genes available and thereby acquired a greater chance of succeeding in the ‘struggle for survival’. Rather, she makes the point that the main motivations for avoiding intermarriage probably pertained to household issues with immediate relevance to people’s everyday lives.97

As mentioned previously, family units of the late-Edo period took the form of household units of production and consumption known as ‘ie’, whose

97 See Kurokawa, Ika to dōka, pp. 91-92; Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, ‘Kindai shakai to buraku sabetsu’ 「近代社会と部落差別」, in Asaji Takeshi et al. (eds) 朝治武ほか編, Datsujōshiki no buraku mondai 『脱常識の部落問題』 (京都：かもがわ出版, 1998), p. 168; Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, ‘Kindai ni okeru buraku sabetsu ishiki no tokushitsu’ 「近代における部落差別意識の特質」, Buraku Kaitō 『部落解放』, vol. 470, June 2000, p. 44. It needs to be added that while continuing to focus on modern state population health, Fujino Yutaka does also refer to the household’s importance. See Fujino, ‘Buraku mondai ni okeru konin kihi’, p. 87.
members were united by a desire to assure not just personal well-being, but also the continuity of ancestor worship into the future. Ōtō Osamu suggests that as a result of its capacity to satisfy that desire, the ‘ie’ became the dominant form of family organization during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But through the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, people’s ability to secure the future of their ‘ie’ was eroded by economic and social changes associated with the developing market economy. Ōtō positions the rise of conventional morality, involving the practice of thrift and industry and so forth (discussed in more detail in chapter seven), as one response to such changes.98

Another response can be seen in the fact that through the late-Edo period, household heads began asserting a greater say in the selection of the marriage partners of household members, even among the lower economic strata. This trend contrasts with the fact that, for example, ‘it was the tradition that the children of the middle and lower peasant strata arrived at marriage via group mingling of young men’s and young women’s groups’ (wakamonogumi 若者組 and musumegumi 娘組) during the early-to-mid-Edo period, especially in western Japan.99

The importance of household patriarchs received official confirmation in the Civil Registration Act of 1871 (effective from 1872). This law required the registration of all subjects according to where they lived and the ‘ie’ to which they belonged, ‘centred on the household patriarch and according to their relation

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98 Ōtō, Kinsei no nōmin no ie, p. 66.
with him'. This was novel, in the sense that ‘ie’ had formerly existed within local networks in town and city districts and in villages. The new registration system removed intermediate bodies and tried to bring household and state into a direct relation via the patriarch, akin to the manner in which the abolition of legal divisions between social classes had been intended to reduce extant barriers between the state and its subjects.100

The confirmation of patriarchal authority, coming in the context of a decline in former community networks, increased human mobility, and a continuing popular desire to find suitable marriage partners who would ensure household continuity, was related to the spread of the practice of arranged marriages. Strategic or arranged marriages driven by household interests and involving intermediaries were recorded only among the ruling classes during the late-sixteenth century.101 The military classes adopted such practices more widely during the early-Edo period, and wealthier peasants, merchants and ‘outcasts’ followed their lead.102 By the mid-to-late-Meiji years, such practices

100 Koyama Shizuko 小山静子, ‘Kazoku no kindai—Meiji shoki ni okeru kazoku no henyō’ 「家族の近代—明治初期における家族の変容」, in Nishikawa Nagao and Matsumiya Hideharu (eds.) 西川長夫・松宮秀治編, Bakumatsu / Meiji-ki no kokumin kokka keisei to bunka hennyō 『幕末·明治期の国民国家形成と文化変容』(東京: 新曜社, 1995), pp. 172-173. This effort also entailed attempts to link household ancestors to village deities, and then to subordinate them all to the authority of the Ise Shrines. Ōtō, Kinsei nōmin to ie, p. 102. In 1898, patriarchal power over household members, including the ability to veto and nullify marriages, was ensnired in the Civil Code, which, for example, gave control over all household property to patriarchs, and allowed them to send other members out as labourers to contribute to the household’s well-being. In difficult times, those who went out to labour could return to the main household, reducing the need for state-run social security programs. See Nishikawa Yūko 西川裕子, Kindai kokka to kazoku moderu 『近代国家と家族モデル』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 2000), pp. 19-20.

101 The daughters of low-ranking military men and peasants seem in contrast to have enjoyed liberal relationships. Akamatsu Keisuke 赤松啓介, Josei no rekishi to minzoku 『女の歴史と民俗』(東京: 明石書店, 1993), p. 35.

had spread to the middle and lower classes, and were common even in rural villages.\(^{103}\)

Industriousness, not to mention wealth and looks, were presumably influential considerations in the determination of a marriage partner's desirability. But lineage or bloodlines acquired great social importance during the Meiji years. This was especially the case among the ruling classes, as signalled by the government's renunciation of the principle that commoners and nobility should be free to intermarry.

In 1884, the Imperial House Agency promulgated the Nobility Law (Kazoku Rei 華族令), of which the ninth article stated, 'Nobles and their children who wish to marry or adopt must first obtain permission from the Imperial House Chancellor'.\(^{104}\) This law reflected the perceived needs of the Imperial House, and more exactly, the perception that it was necessary to secure an appropriate marriage pool uncontaminated by low class elements for the purposes of aristocratic and royal procreation. The Royal Code (Kōshitsu Tenpan 皇室典範), which followed in 1889, confirmed this by dictating that marriages of royalty 'shall be limited to those between themselves, or with members of the aristocracy who have obtained special authorization' (Article 39). Article 40 provided for the Imperial House Chancellor to countersign such authorizations. To guarantee

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\(^{103}\) Kamishima, *Nihonjin no kekkonkan*, pp. 27-33. From a different perspective, the rise of arranged marriages was one of the reasons for the decline of village youth groups and customary marriage practices. Presumably this trend was accelerated by the gradual increase in the influence of household patriarchs over marriage partner selection, which was evident since the late-Edo period.

direct descent into the future, Article 42 stipulated, ‘Royalty may not engage in adoption’.

Bloodlines were of paramount importance in these social circles.

People of the lower social strata had by no means been ignorant of or disinterested in matters of ‘pedigree’ or ‘lineage’ during the Edo period. Strongly aware of the socio-political implications of such considerations, rich peasants, ‘outcasts’ and merchants had liked to draft lineage charts linking themselves to royalty, aristocracy, or deities, and the common people of the Meiji period maintained these practices. People’s sensitivity to the notion of lineage may also have been heightened, as Uesugi Satoshi suggests, by the fact that the Meiji Civil Registration system focused on the household as a ‘lineal and temporal flow’, recording individuals according to their position in a blood-linked family hierarchy under the patriarch.

It is also to be noted that certain intellectuals acted to stimulate popular concerns about lineage, bloodlines, and reproduction. Notably, the influential scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) encouraged the populace at large to take

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105 A draft, amendments and the final version of the Royal Code are reproduced in Kobayakawa Kingo 小早川欣吾, Meiji hôsei shi ron, jôkan 『明治法制史論 上巻』(東京: 崇松堂書店, 1940), pp. 95-106.
106 Ōtô, Kinsei no nōmin to ie, p. 102.
107 Yanagita, Meiji bunkashi, vol. 13, pp. 116-117. This behavior is analogous to that of royal functionaries who attached Mutsuhito’s lineage to the influential folk-god Amaterasu in order to shore up his authority. Using the same strategy, the journalist and ‘buraku’ activist Maeda Sanyû (1869-1923), a former student of the prominent liberal intellectual Nakae Chômin (1847-1901), asserted that many ‘new commoners’ were of exalted lineage, being in fact descended from ‘ancient heroes’ who had taken refuge in ‘outcast’ settlements after being defeated in battles of the late-sixteenth century. Maeda Sanyû 前田三遊, ‘Kettô jô yori mitaru kishin to shinheimin’ 「血統上より観たる貴绅と新平民」, Chûô Kôron 『中央公論』, vol. 18, no. 6, June 1903, in Amano Takurô (ed.) 天野卓郎編, Maeda Sanyû ronshû 『前田三遊論集』(東京: 世界文庫, 1969), p. 34. Matsui Shôgorô, a Nara entrepreneur and ‘buraku’ activist, did likewise. Meiji no Hikari 『明治之光』, vol. 6, no. 6, June 1917, in KBSS: 6, pp. 227-228. As Hirano Yoshihisa notes, however, their adoption of splendid ancestors was another expression of the kind of ‘lineage-ism’ (血統主義) that was a major factor in discrimination against them. Hirano, ‘Taishû bungei no isô’, pp. 29-30.
care with their marriage practices and bloodlines. In an 1884 speech made in Tokyo that was later published in his own Jiji Shinpō newspaper, he expounded briefly on the principles of heredity. Noting that mental and physical characteristics were inherited from one’s ancestors, and referring to the importance placed on stock bloodlines in the Occident, he called on Japanese people to think more about their own bloodlines so that they might improve their own breeding. Criticizing the three main factors that he saw to be decisive in the popular selection of marriage partners—in order of decreasing importance, wealth, external appearance, and health—Fukuzawa argued that before contracting marriage, ‘one should investigate the bloodlines and genetic background’ of the prospective partner, and also of his or her relatives.109

Takahashi Yoshio, who had studied at Fukuzawa’s Keiō Gijuku academy before becoming a journalist with the Jiji Shinpō newspaper, reiterated that point in a work published in September of 1884. Investigating the lineage of possible marriage partners was especially important, he said, when one was not acquainted with the prospective partner’s family. Takahashi then went on to link that suggestion to everyday concerns, advising that such caution would help people to protect their household interests and family bloodlines.110

Parts of the urban populace answered these calls around the turn of the century, when agencies specializing in the investigation of prospective marriage partners and their families met with considerable demand for their services. Marriage consultancies first emerged in Tokyo and Osaka in the late 1870s and

1880s, assisting those seeking husbands, wives, or adoptive heirs. In a novel
turn, private agencies began advertising their services in ‘marriage investigation’
during the last years of the nineteenth century. The first major enterprise to
specialize in such activities was the ‘Confidence Centre’ (Anshinjo 安信所),
founded by the Höchi Shinbun newspaper house in 1912. This agency was so
successful that a short time later, the company opened an Osaka branch, which
likewise ‘had many clients and prospered’.

People’s main motivations for employing such agencies in the cities were
presumably related to massive urban growth and the severing of traditional local
networks. Dislocated from customary ways of finding out about prospective
marriage partners, they employed professionals to ensure that they were
marrying with suitable kinds of people. In one 1906 advertisement, an agency
listed the sorts of considerations that it thought people were interested in. It
promised to investigate subjects thoroughly, ‘from academic and artistic
elements to their past conduct, the capital resources of fathers and brothers, and
the nature of their bloodlines’.

The suitability of marriage partners depended on their intellectual and economic capital, and also their lineage, or genetic capital.

Whether it was the family of people considering marriage or the
prospective partners themselves who engaged the services of these agencies,
‘new commoners’ and ‘buraku’ residents were likely to do badly in such
assessments. Not only had exclusion from social and economic relations

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111 'Kekkon sōdanjo no hajime' 「結婚相談所の始め」, in Kida, Meiji Nippon, pp. 67-68.
112 'Himitsu tanteigyō no hajime' 「秘密捜偵業の始め」, in Kida, Meiji Nippon, pp. 169-170.
113 Onishi Ringorō 大西林五郎, Nihon shinbun hattenshi, Meiji Taishō hen 『日本新聞発展史
114 'Kekkon Shinyō Chōsajo' 「結婚信用調査所」, Miyako Shinbun 『都新聞』, 13 May 1906.
frequently caused impoverishment, but intellectual inquiry into the reasons for their exclusion from social and economic relations had also led to the production of explanations founded on notions of hereditary physical and moral defects.115 This is not to mention the persistence of former status-related prejudices. One can propose that because of these considerations, as well as because of the obligation to honour and maintain their household lines and ancestors, people of the late-Meiji period tended to avoid ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ as marriage partners.

The practice of intermarriage

Journalists reported less frequently on cases of marriage avoidance involving ‘new commoners’ during the last decade of the Meiji period. ‘News’ media focus on sensational or novel phenomena, and there may well have been a simple absence of such cases in the late Meiji years. A decrease in reports might also indicate the decreasing novelty of intermarriage. But as media treatments of the topic became less common, local and central government officials began to compile relevant reports, especially from the mid-1900s onwards. Stimulated by the Regional Improvement Campaign that followed the Russo-Japanese war, the authorities showed considerable interest in ways to promote the economic development of poorer people.116 To that end, some began collating data on ‘buraku’ communities. A certain number of statistical studies were also

115 Marriage avoidance was also common in the case of sick people. ‘Hototogisu’「不帰婦」, an immensely popular work by Tokutomi Roka that was serialized in the Kokumin Shinbun from November 1898 to May 1899 and published in 1900, featured an aristocratic heroine who was obliged to divorce her aristocratic husband after developing tuberculosis. ‘The central theme is that she is expelled because her tuberculosis endangers the survival of the household.’ Ikeuchi Teruo 池内輝男, ‘Sensô to bungaku’「戦争と文学」, in Kubota Jun et al. (eds.) 久保田淳ほか編, Iwanami köza Nihon bungakushi, vol. 12 『岩波講座日本文学史 第12巻』(東京: 岩波書店, 1996), pp. 180-181.

116 See chapter seven for more on this campaign.
produced, mainly during the Taisho period (1912-1926). While the available data is restricted to certain regions in the west of Japan, they permit some observations about the situation of 'buraku intermarriage' during the last part of the Meiji period.

In 1907, local officials in Wakayama, under instructions from the prefectural authorities (who were themselves acting under orders from the Interior Ministry) conducted an investigation into the local situation of 'new commoners'. The Kii Mainichi Shinbun printed their findings. Concerning marriage and social relations, the authors reported that 'There is a general tendency to shun them, and there are no cases of intermarriage'. The authors of a Mie prefecture report into ‘buraku reform’ published in 1907 announced similar findings. ‘This breed [shuzoku 種族] is denigrated by society [...] and endogamous’. A study begun in 1906 and published in August 1908 on Hyogo prefecture’s Ibo district ‘buraku’ communities noted that there were no marriages with outsiders. ‘It is no exaggeration to say they are friendless if they so much as take a step out of their own settlements’.

Kanamori Michitomo (1857-1945), a Protestant priest and briefly an Interior Ministry employee, conducted a detailed study published in 1911 of a large Mie prefecture ‘buraku’ community. Kanamori recorded that ‘there are no marriages with ordinary people’. However, he found that relations between ‘buraku’ residents and the ‘mainstream’ were improving. 'Encountering the tides

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117 ‘Shinheimin no jōtai’「新平民の状態」, Kii Mainichi Shinbun 『紀伊毎日新聞』, 8, 9 and 10 May 1907, in KBSS: 4, pp. 267-269.
118 Mie ken 三重県, ‘Tokushu buraku kaizen no kōgai’「特種部落改善の梗概」, 1907, in MKBS, p. 44.
of enlightenment, the upper strata have gradually come to socialize, and eat and drink together, although they steadfastly refuse to engage in marriage’.\(^{120}\)

There were also reports of a certain number of cases of successful intermarriages. At an Interior Ministry-organized conference on ‘buraku’ reform that was held in November 1912, Namae Takayuki (1867-1957), a government official who had been dispatched to Miyazaki prefecture in the far west of Kyushu, reported on the case of a ‘buraku’ settlement of some 36 or 37 houses.\(^{121}\) ‘A woman from there and an ordinary youth were married. His relatives were strongly opposed to begin with, but the two insisted, and were able to marry. Now their home is harmonious, they work extremely hard, and are able to accumulate savings. Those relatives who were opposed to begin with have taken note, and [...] acquired a wife from that buraku for their own son’. A third marriage had taken place too. ‘If social intercourse and conciliation [yūwa 融和] develop to this point, I think we can say that the problem is solved’.\(^{122}\)

There are a few less detailed reports of similar trends elsewhere. In a special issue dedicated to ‘buraku’ matters of the ethnologist Kita Teikichi’s journal, Race and History, one writer reported that residents of small former ‘kawata’ status communities in a rural Shizuoka prefecture district had become

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\(^{120}\) Kanamori Michitomo 金森通綱, ‘Chōsasho no hikae‘ 調査書の控’, 5 October 1911, in MKBS, pp. 95-99. Kanamori Michitomo studied at the Kumamoto Western School and then at the Dōshisha academy before becoming a priest. His evangelical work hinted at an interest in the downtrodden, with his Okayama prefecture congregation in the 1880s reported to have included a number of ‘new commoners’. See Omori Hisao 大森久雄, ‘Buraku kaizen undō’ 部落改善運動, in Okayama Kenshi Hensan linkai (ed.) 岡山県史編纂委員会編, Okayama kenshi, vol. 11 『岡山県史 第11巻』 (岡山: 山陽新報社, 1987), pp. 435-436.

\(^{121}\) Namae Takayuki was a conference chair. Considered one of the founders of Japanese social policy, he was also involved in childcare policy and garden city planning.

\(^{122}\) Namae Takayuki 生江孝之, in ‘Saimin Buraku Kaizen Kyōgikai sokkiroku’ 細民部落改善協議会速記録, 7 November 1912, in KBSS: 5, p. 149. Inoue Makoto, a Miyazaki prefecture official, pointed out these were exceptional cases, even given that local ‘buraku’ communities were generally fairly well-off with high educational levels (‘Saimin Buraku Kaizen Kyōgikai sokkiroku’, pp.149-150).
regular peasants and intermarried with other commoners. Despite obstacles such as former status-related prejudices and elite discourses alleging 'new commoner' defectivity, factors including diligent work, conscientious study and successful capital accumulation could evidently negate initial familial reluctance to engage in 'intermarriage'.

**Love, patriotism, and national harmony**

Lastly, I wish to refer to a novel development that became apparent around the turn of the nineteenth century. Instances of personal sentiment conquering considerations of 'descent' and 'pedigree' began re-appearing in the world of fiction. Whereas early- and mid-Meiji-period authors had used marriage between 'new' and 'old' commoners to express enlightenment, late-Meiji authors began using such marriages in their attempts to portray the nature of conjugal love. They represented marriages with people of 'new commoner' or 'buraku descent' which took place in full knowledge of that 'fact' as selfless acts exemplifying the exalted love that ought to join spouses.

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123 Tōtōmi Kibun Rōjin, 遠江奇聞老人, 'Kanzen ni yūwa saretaru buraku' 「完全に融和された部落」, Minzoku To Rekishi 『民族と歴史』, vol. 2, no. 1, July 1919, pp. 219-221.
124 Incidentally, the Interior Ministry's Social Bureau compiled national statistics on 'buraku' life and customs, which suggested that the incidence of intermarriage was slowly rising. Although for a somewhat later period than that with which we are principally concerned (the late 1910s), official figures indicated that around three percent, or 427 of a total of 12,339 marriages involving 'burakumin', were with non-'burakumin' partners. Naimushō Shakaiyoku 内務省社会局, 'Buraku ni kansuru shotōkei' 「部落に関する諸統計」, 1921, in NSSS: 25, pp. 693, 702-703. In all likelihood, many more cases went unrecorded, given that those who engaged in 'intermarriage' were aware that 'success' often hinged on keeping their 'origins' quiet. The authors of a detailed 1915 study of Nara prefecture customs recorded the characteristics of 'buraku' communities, with sections on marriage partner origins, divorce, marriage customs, and so on. They found that there were virtually no public cases of intermarriage. Even so, in one village, 'it is said that among those who have moved to Osaka and other cities and concealed their civil registration, there are some who marry with ordinary people'. In another village too, 'there are rare cases [of intermarriage] among those who have moved to Kobe, Osaka, and other cities'. See 'Nara Ken Fuzoku shi (excerpts)' 「奈良県風俗誌 (抄)」, 1915, in NSSS: 25, pp. 568, 577, 592.
An early example appeared in the 1899 work 'Migrant academy', by Shimizu Shikin (1868-1933). This story featured a government minister who, in order to prevent the government being damaged by any hint of scandal, resigns from his post upon being informed by his wife that she was of 'new commoner descent'. In other words, he chooses his spouse over his career.125 ‘Blameless’, by Hirotsu Ryo [sic] (1861-1928), which appeared in 1903, provides another example, with the doctor Yamase Genkei standing by his wife Okei despite the revelation of her 'eta descent'. This leads to social ostracism, which forces him to give up his practice, and the story ends with the couple rumoured to have sought refuge in the United States.126 The best-selling work ‘Sōfuren’ (roughly, 'How I miss my husband'), also published in 1903, had a similar plot. Written by a prolific writer of popular fiction named Watanabe Katei (1864-1926), this novel and later stage play dealt with the successful marriage of a ‘buraku’ girl to an aristocrat by means of various subterfuges. The couple is separated, and the ‘buraku’ girl’s origins come to light. But in the end, the nobleman re-marries the heroine, knowing that she is the daughter of a ‘new commoner’, this time for love.127

The authors of these works placed little emphasis on notions of ‘eta’, ‘new commoner’ or ‘buraku’ ‘defectivity’; one of their aims was to criticize such social prejudices, as well as the custom of sacrificing individual happiness on the household altar. Another of their primary concerns was to evoke, through reference to entrenched social prejudices, the powerful affective tie, namely,

conjugal love, that they felt ought to bind together families, which more and more commonly were termed ‘katei’ (家庭) or ‘homes’, rather than ‘ie’.

The depiction of conjugal love in these works as something powerful enough to withstand such pressures as the revelation of ‘eta descent’ on the part of one spouse can be linked to the rise of the national equivalent of that same sentiment, namely patriotism. Such representations of conjugal love emerged parallel to representations of ‘Japan’ as a ‘family state’ (kazoku kokka 家族国家). The members of this hyper-extended family—the ‘nation’—were to be bound together by ties of patriotism, or love of country. And the required degree of dedication of these members to their country was to be akin to that displayed by the ‘regular’ citizens in these stories towards their ‘buraku’ spouses.128

To situate these suggestions within a broader historical context, Japanese involvement in two wars, first with China in 1894-1895, and later with Russia in 1904-1905, gave rise to ever-strengthening calls for ‘national unity’. Around the turn of the century, many began to think that in view of Japan’s international situation, a more harmonious union of the domestic population was desirable. That a number of intellectuals began representing ‘intermarriage’ as a model expression of loving unity was one expression of this notion. In other words, some members of the intelligentsia had come full circle, from denouncing the ostracism and denigration of ‘former outcasts’ and ‘new commoners’ as ‘errant ways’, to justifying such practices from the perspective of Japanese ‘racial improvement’, to denouncing them again as an unwanted expression of national discord at a time when solidarity was more important than ever.

At the level of everyday life, of course, intellectuals and officials proved unsuccessful in their attempts to convince people to engage with ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ as ‘ordinary’ fellow imperial subjects. As we shall see in the next chapter, that failure was also a factor of attempts to justify discrimination against such people by means of claims that they were of ‘foreign ancestry’.
Chapter three

The ‘outcast’ and the ‘foreign’

Intellectuals and the ‘eta’ status group

From the eighteenth century onwards, a trend emerged for scholars to suggest that the practice of avoiding social intercourse with members of the status group labelled ‘eta’ was closely associated with the fact that such people were of foreign ancestry. Similar notions of an irredeemable ‘foreignness’ were also used to justify discrimination against ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ in Meiji Japan. Although without foundation, those theories are of considerable contemporary interest, as they afford insight into the processes whereby ‘foreignness’ was rendered a stigma that justified denigration of its sufferers. To begin, I wish to essay a sketch of the intellectual context in which such claims first came to prominence.
The Edo-period social order was founded on a division of labour in the first instance between the military class rulers and those ruled by them. Both parties were further subdivided according to a range of factors relating to occupation and lineage, and were joined in a social hierarchy of considerable complexity. Scholars adapted Confucian thought in constructing an intellectual framework that legitimated the status quo.

Early-Edo-period Confucianists argued, as the influential scholar Hayashi Razan¹ (1583-1657) did, that the existence of differential status and ranking in all things, including human relationships, was a manifestation of natural order. "Hierarchical relationships in a status society were the natural mode of organization", for Hayashi, "because they reflected the divisions found in nature itself."²

Yamaga Sōkō (1622-1685), another eminent Confucianist who shared the conviction that social divisions reflected "the general law of heaven and earth",³ outlined the nature of the ideal social system. Peasants should farm, artisans produce the necessary tools for them to do so, merchants facilitate the circulation of goods, and rulers ensure general peace and contentment by making sure that all people smoothly performed their designated functions. Status was to be commensurate with occupation, and hierarchical differences between status groups were to be maintained, as any deviations or changes were apt to endanger

¹ It must be noted that early-Edo period Confucianists—even Hayashi Razan, who worked for four different shoguns—had little influence on policy-making, at least, not during their own time. Hayashi's writings, for example, became influential especially from the late-eighteenth century. Watanabe Hiroshi 渡辺浩, Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku 『近世日本社会と宋学』 (東京: 東京大学出版会, 1985), pp. 24-27.
the whole well-balanced system. For society to function correctly, and thus for the government to fulfil its duty of ensuring popular contentment, it was vital that rulers assure order and stability. Confucian teachings held that to legitimate their position, rulers were required to practice ‘benevolent rule’ (jinsei 仁政) that ensured the welfare of their subjects. In their interpretation of this principle, many Edo-period scholars determined that the practice of benevolent government required rulers to establish and police proper status divisions between the people.

Of the ruled, peasants were considered the economic foundation of the entire system, and thus in theory they were held in higher regard by rulers than were artisans, who nonetheless were considered superior to unproductive merchants. Needless to say, these principles were not necessarily reflected in reality. With regard to people classed in the ‘eta’ status group, Yamaga Sokō saw their principal roles in society to consist of carrying out punishments, maintaining urban order, producing leather goods, and disposing of animal

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6 Although some scholars recommended modifications in the extant system, with Hayashi Shihei and Kaiho Seiryō emphasizing the fundamental importance of trade even for members of the bushi stratum (see Kojima Yasuyoshi 小島康敬, ‘Kaiho Seiryō—sono shii kōzō’ 「海保清隆—その思惟構造」, in Sagara Jun et al. (eds.) 相良俊ほか編, Edo no shisōkatachi, gekan 『江戸の思想家たち 下巻』 (Tokyo: 研究社, 1979), pp. 119-122), and others such as Satō Nobuhiro proposing the creation of a unified state with the population re-organized into eight working groups of fishers, farmers, miners, and so forth (see Shimazaki Takao 島崎隆夫, ‘Satō Nobuhiro—jinbutsu / shisō narabini kenkyūshi’ 「佐藤信雄—人物・思想ならびに研究史」, in Bitō Masahide and Shimazaki Takao (annot.) 尾藤正英・島崎隆夫校注, Nihon shisō taitē, vol. 45, Andō Shōeki / Satō Nobuhiro 『日本思想体系 第45巻 安東昌之・佐藤信雄』 (東京 : 岩波書店, 1977), pp. 609-611), few took the radical step of arguing for the abolition of status divisions per se. No doubt this was tied to that fact that even if scholars were not always possessed of great influence and means, they were at least positioned in a privileged social position in comparison to the vast majority of the population.
carcasses. In terms of function, those people who produced leather goods were clearly artisans or craftsmen, while those who performed policing or judicial duties were low-level government functionaries. Despite their unquestionable social utility, such people were given a pejorative status appellation, positioned on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, and frequently despised by others.

From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, a few scholars looked at why the social value of 'eta' status people was not reflected in attitudes toward them. Such inquiry saw some come up with explanations naturalizing the avoidance and denigration of 'eta' status people. The work of the noted scholar Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) is a case in point.

In the early-eighteenth century, Sorai denounced the general collapse of morality, which he saw to be exemplified by phenomena such as the tendency for commoner women to become entertainers, and for 'kawaramono' (in Sorai's opinion, 'kawaramono' were equivalent to 'kawata'/eta', given that he mentions that they are under the control of the Danzaemon) to become merchants. Sorai's prescription for the hierarchical confusion that affected all of the social strata was more social regulation, to make bushi return to their domains, stop peasant mobility, and enforce rigid status group separations.

Sorai developed the idea that social hierarchy was not an expression of natural law, but was rather an artifice designed by rulers to facilitate the practice of government. In making the novel argument that status groups were human constructs, he suggested that the Chinese sages had long ago invented the military, peasant, artisan and merchant classes with a view to bringing 'peace to

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8 Ogyū Sorai 萩生徂徠, 'Seidan 「政談」, in SHYH, p. 16.
9 Maruyama, Studies, pp. 214, 218-219. See also Harootunian, Toward, pp. 22-23.
the people'.

In order to restore social order and ensure popular contentment, he called on Tokugawa rulers to emulate them, and to re-invent and cement such social divisions.

Although Sorai argued for the necessity of creating and maintaining correct social divisions from a Confucian standpoint, he considered the practice of avoiding contact with people of ‘eta’ status from a somewhat different perspective. Focusing on the common aversion to sharing a hearth or fire (dōka同火) with such people for fear of becoming polluted, Sorai mentioned that there was no basis for this kind of avoidance in the Confucian and Buddhist traditions. But he considered that such aversion had unshakeable foundation nonetheless. Or rather, as a ‘custom of the god-country’ (shinkoku no fōzoku 神国の風俗), it was ‘beyond evaluation as good or bad’ (zehi nashi是非なし).

Kinugasa Yasuki suggests that many Edo-period scholars adopted Sorai’s stratagem of relying upon Confucian ideas to explain and legitimise most aspects of the extant social hierarchy, and then drawing on Shintō ‘traditions’ to justify inconvenient anomalies such as the practice of avoiding and denigrating ‘eta’

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10 Maruyama, Studies, p. 228.
11 The idea of a universal human nature, which would tend to contradict such practices, was a core tenet of Confucian thought. Herman Ooms, Tokugawa village practice: class, status, power, law (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 301. There was also a Buddhist school of thought antagonistic to prejudice and hierarchy. Shinran 観鸞上人 (1173-1262), the founder of the Pure Land True Faith sect (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗), not only did away with prohibitions on clerical marriage and meat-eating, he also announced ‘There is no difference among those who are living upon fishing […] those who are dragging out an existence with hunting game or fouling [fowling?] on field and mountain, and those who are getting along in trade or tilling the soil.’ Quoted in Bellah, Tokugawa religion, pp. 68-69. His more or less contemporary Ippen (一遍) proselytized among ‘hinin’. See Amino’s analysis of ‘Ippen Hijiriê’ 「一遍聖絵」, in Amino Yoshihiko 綱野善彦, Nihon no rekishi wo yominaosu 『日本の歴史をよみなおす』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1991), pp. 121-138. Often attacked by members of more aristocratic Buddhist sects, those who followed the teachings of Shinran, Ippen and Hōnen were continually repressed by the authorities as dangerous subversives. Okiura Kazuteru 沖浦和光, ‘Kaisetsu『解説』', in SHYH, pp. 272-273.
12 Ogyū, ‘Seidan’, p. 18.
status people. This was perhaps not so forced an artifice as it might first appear, given that there was a clear tendency for Edo-period Confucianists to equate the way of the sages and the way of the kami in their efforts to ‘naturalize’ Confucian thought.

Only a few scholars expressed explicitly critical views of the treatment of people of ‘eta’ status. Foremost among them was the Osaka Kaitokudō merchant academy Confucianist Nakai Riken (1732-1817), who took issue with the custom of avoiding ‘butchers’ (tosha 範者, signifying people of ‘eta’ status), and treating them as though they were ‘outside humanity’ (hito no soto naru mono 人の外なるもの) on the grounds that their occupations were ‘lowly’ and ‘polluted’ (sengyō 賢業). This mistaken practice derived from the stupidity of Shintoists, he argued, who were ignorant even of the fact that ancient emperors happily consumed supposedly ‘polluted’ boar and deer meat.

The absence of Confucian or Buddhist justification for denigrating members of certain status groups led scholars such as Sorai to seek recourse in Shintō teachings about purity and pollution, which they announced were unquestionable because indigenous and derived from practices involving the divine royal house. Another response was to denounce those supposed Shintō traditions on historical grounds, in the manner of Nakai Riken. As Noma Hiroshi and Okiura Kazuteru suggest, a third scholarly response to unease about the existence of a status group such as that which officials named ‘eta’ took the form

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13 The preceding interpretation of Sorai’s remarks is also based on Kinugasa Yasuki 衣笠安喜, Kinsei Jugaku shisōshi no kenkyū 『近世儒学思想史の研究』 (東京：法政大学出版局, 1976), pp. 120 and 116-117.
15 Nakai Riken 中井履軒, ‘Nenseiroku 『年成録』’, in SHYH, pp. 34-35. It is to be noted that the consumption of broadly defined ‘game’, including turtles, fowls, boar, bear and deer, appears to have been seen in a very different light to the consumption of domesticated animals.
of claims that prejudices against ‘eta’ status people were a factor of their foreign origins.\(^{16}\)

In principle, (proto) ‘racial’, ‘national’, or ‘ethnic’ considerations did not determine people’s moral worth in the Tokugawa system. The main Confucian-inspired criterion for moral consideration revolved around whether one was ‘civilized’ or ‘barbarian’. While there were barbarian lands, provenance from them did not render one irredeemably barbarian; barbarity was a quality that might be overcome through submission to the state, and by self-cultivation. Inclusion and exclusion were ‘culturally’ determined.\(^{17}\)

In clear contradiction of this principle, there appeared claims about ‘eta’ status people having foreign origins. These claims grew out of the perception that there existed permanent hereditary barriers between different status groups. That is, while status groups were (roughly speaking) occupational groupings, people considered bushi, commoners and ‘eta’ to be of different ‘lineage types’ (shushō 種姓) because status was hereditary.\(^{18}\) Ogyū Sorai, for example, indicated that in his opinion, the social excommunication of prostitutes (yūjo 遊女) and ‘kawaramono’ was linked to the fact that they were of a different lineage type.\(^{19}\) Although the notion of a different lineage type cannot exactly be equated with

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\(^{16}\) See Noma Hiroshi and Okiura Kazuteru 野間宏・沖浦和光, Ajia no sei to sen—hisabetsumin no rekishi to bunka 『アジアの聖と戦—被差別民の歴史と文化』(京都: 人文書院, 1983), p. 288.


\(^{19}\) Sorai, ‘Seidan’, p. 16. See also Yamamoto Naotomo 山本尚友, ‘Mibun kaihō he no dōtei 『身分解放への道程』, in KNBS: 1, pp. 401-402.
‘foreignness’, it expressed notions of heredity and some kind of permanent separation between human groupings that were similar to those implied by claims about ‘eta’ status people having foreign antecedents.

‘China’ and ‘outcasts’

Some early attempts to explain the circumstances of ‘eta’ status people took the form of claims that they were descended from ‘Chinese’ people. Adherents of this view proposed that around three thousand nobles and retainers fleeing after the collapse of the state of En (Yan: around contemporary Beijing municipality) had crossed over to Japan in the late-third century BCE. According to this theory, the Japanese avoided these refugees because they were foreign, and popular xenophobia forced immigrants into ‘polluted’ and ‘lowly’ occupations that violated Shinto and Buddhist religious tenets. Proponents of this theory argued that people thereafter shunned them ever more assiduously because of their pollution, with the result that their descendants became the current-day ‘eta’.

This story appeared in texts of the mid-to-late-Edo period, although an early example can be seen in a text dating to 1488. The ‘Kyōhō Sewa’, a collection of popular sayings, poems, and other writings collated between 1722 and 1725 by an unknown editor or editors, contains one account. The Osaka encyclopedist Matsui Rashū (1750-1822) recorded the story in a work that was

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21 Kinugawa, Kinsei jugaku shisoshibi, p. 120.
22 See Kawashima Masao 川崎昌生, ‘Chūsei kōki senmin no shokushū to senshi’ ‘中世後期庶民の職掌と職等’, in KNBS: 1, p. 96.
published posthumously in 1845,\(^{24}\) while such a tale was also appended to an obscure mid-to-late-Edo-period document purporting to be a record of the Danzaemon household’s lineage.\(^{25}\) ‘Kawaramakimono’ scrolls of the late-Edo period featured this fable,\(^{26}\) and some early-Meiji period authors mentioned it in passing too.\(^{27}\)

The basic story was derived from accounts of the fall of the state of Yan. Feeling threatened by the growing power of the Qin regime, the prince of Yan sent an assassin to kill the Qin tyrant (Qin Shihuang 秦始皇) in the year 227 BCE. The assassin’s failure led to reprisals: the Qin state invaded and took over Yan. The friends of Prince Tan (丹太子) and Ching Ko (荆轲) the assassin were persecuted, and ‘all of [them] went into hiding’.\(^{28}\)

Evidently, some Japanese intellectuals had relied on this well-known story from the Records of the historian (Japanese Shiki 史記) in conjuring up the claim that the Prince of Yan and his followers had made their way to Japan, where their descendants lived on as people of ‘eta’ status. This theory was quite improbable. Matsui Rashū was moved to append a note reminding readers that

there was no evidence for the claim that warriors from Yan had come to Japan, and that the story required verification or reconsideration. As Miyoshi Iheiji much later pointed out, it was exceedingly unlikely that such a band could have left no documentary evidence detailing their arrival and settlement in Japan.

Not only was the claim that 'eta' were descended from aristocratic refugees from Yan without historical basis, it was also at odds with the overall tendency for Edo-period scholars to view 'China' as the civilized world's centre (chūka 中華), and 'Japan' as a relatively minor state on its margins. It is possible to explain this apparent anomaly with reference to deteriorating attitudes towards China in certain intellectual circles during the mid-to-late-Edo period.

Following the downfall of the Ming dynasty and the rise of a unified Qing (Manchu) state in the mid-seventeenth century, some Japanese Confucianists began representing their state as the foremost of China's satellites. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scholars of Dutch learning further promoted the downgrading of Chinese centrality by making clear the existence of other civilized centres in the West. Influenced by these developments, a few more extreme Japanese Confucianists began arguing that the rise of the Qing dynasty signalled the establishment of a barbarian state in China and the end of Chinese centrality. Holders of this view determined that in

the wake of that decline, Japan was best qualified to claim the mantle of the world’s civilized centre.33

The rise of Japanese Nativism (Kokugaku 国学) through the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century saw further re-positioning of China within the Japanese intellectual sphere. Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), one of the pre-eminent Nativists, rejected the notion that Japan should be judged according to Confucian, which was to say, Chinese, standards. Arguing that cultural and moral standards were plural and differed according to time and place, Norinaga took issue with the appropriateness of Confucian thought in the Japanese context, and contended that the ancient Japanese had not needed such teachings. ‘In ancient Japan’, Norinaga reckoned, ‘people felt no special need to enunciate moral norms or rules of ethical behaviour because their conduct was naturally good’. The innate goodness of Japanese people was reflected, for example, in the fact that although Chinese dynasties had been overthrown regularly, the Japanese ruling house had never changed.34

A central concern of Nativists was the recovery (or invention), of this essential Japanese goodness that had been sabotaged and deformed by foreign influences, and especially by Confucian and Buddhist thought. During that venture, ‘the nativists transformed China to mean the Other; China, which had served metaphorically to convey the sense of civilization as juxtaposed with the

rudeness of nature, was transformed into its opposite. As suggested by Motoori’s optimistic claim that Japan was one despite comprising many provinces, the Nativist project of recovering Japanese goodness was an attempt to create a sense of countrywide unity through making and denigrating Chinese ‘others’ and differentiating China from Japan in a manner establishing the latter’s superiority.

Nativist-inspired representations of ‘China’ resembled that image evoked by accounts of the coming of Yan refugees to Japan and their transformation into ‘eta’. Both depicted ‘China’ as a disorderly and revolution-prone land where ruling dynasties were regularly replaced, in stark contrast to Japan, where the royal line, as scholars incessantly announced, was unbroken since its ancient inception. From this perspective, it is conceivable that intellectuals created and transmitted the unlikely tale about the Prince of Yan from a desire to explain the phenomenon of prejudices against people of ‘eta’ status, and under the influence of this tide of anti-Chinese thought.

The popularity of this Yan theory faded during the Meiji period. But to digress briefly, we can note one early-Meiji mention of Chinese origins that expressed a different view both of ‘eta’ and of ‘China’. Matsuzawa Kyūsaku (松沢求策, 1855-1887), who was briefly to become a celebrated Freedom and

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Popular Rights activist, wrote a story in 1875 about how ‘eta’ were descended from men sent by a Chinese emperor to collect medicinal herbs from the slopes of Mount Fuji. Matsuzawa wrote this story whilst studying at a private academy run by a man named Takei Yōsetsu. Takei was a scholar of the Chinese classics, and it is reasonable to think that another account concerning the first emperor of Qin (who earlier invaded Yan) inspired Matsuzawa’s story. Chinese records document that the founder of the Qin dynasty sent out envoys in search of ‘magic fungus, rare herbs and immortals’. However, they returned in failure. ‘Xu Fu [徐福] and the other alchemists who had set to sea to find magic herbs but failed after many years and much expense, told a lie to escape being punished. “The herbs are to be had on Penglai” [蓬莱, on the now Shandong peninsula], they said. “But we were so harassed by monstrous whales that we could not reach the fairy isles.”’

Edo-period intellectuals were acquainted with the suggestion that those alchemists might have reached Japan. Adapting that account, Matsuzawa conjectured that they became people of ‘eta’ status. He then devised a happy end for their long-marooned descendants, ending his and their story with the felicitous event of ‘outcast’ liberation by the benevolent Meiji emperor. Although tending to idealize the Japanese monarch, Matsuzawa’s story did so without placing great weight upon notions of ‘national preference’ and ‘pollution’.

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39 Matsuzawa’s essay of 4 November 1875 is reproduced in KBSS: 2, pp. 190-191.
Barbarian others

Some scholars of the late-Edo period claimed that 'eta' status people were descended from 'barbarians', and in particular from northern barbarians, whom they termed 'Ezo'. Incorporating the Chinese character signifying 'barbarian' (i 夷), the term Ezochi (蝦夷地) referred to the northern island that is today known as Hokkaido, and the term 'Ezo' (蝦夷) to its indigenous inhabitants. A number of factors appear to have led intellectuals to associate 'eta' status people with the inhabitants of that northern island.

Firstly, some considered the far-off Ezochi not just to be 'barbarian' according to the Confucian worldview of civilized core regions and barbarous margins (kai chitsujo 華夷秩序), but also to be a polluted place inhabited by hunters, salt-vendors, butchers, and other despised populations. This view was probably informed by the fact that Ezochi had long been known as an important point of origin for imported animal pelts and leather goods.

Also significant was the fact that in the Edo period's social order, civilized people worthy of moral consideration could be visually distinguished from barbarians who were not. In response to Bakufu and domainal encouragements and orders, male commoners and bushi all across the main islands shaved off the top-front part of their crania (sakayaki 月代), drew forth a topknot over that area (mage 鬓), and shaved off their beards. These bodily styles

signified a minimum degree of civilization. By contrast, in the eyes of late-Edo
officials and intellectuals, the barbarity of 'Ezo' people was manifest in their
beards and long untied hair. People of the 'eta' and 'hinin' status groups too,
were frequently required by law to manifest such stigma as untied hair (although
the situation varied in reality because of domainal legal variations, and because
many people flouted such laws). The fact that people of 'eta' and 'hinin' status
were often required to display similar physical markers of barbarity to people
labelled 'Ezo', suggests Kikuchi Isao, encouraged scholars to associate the two,
and to imagine that they had common ancestors.43

Most early claims that 'eta' status people were of barbarian ancestry were
brief. The unidentified author of an obscure text known as the 'Musashino
zatsudan' mentioned that 'in Kanto, people see the eta as people who are
descended from savages' (banzoku 蕃族). But it is not clear that the author had
specific 'savages' in mind.44 In a 1717 work, the Shintoist scholar Tani Jinzan
(1663-1718) commented that 'eta' were probably of 'Ezo' origin.45

The eminent economist and free trade advocate Kaiho Seiryō (1755-
1817) subsequently expressed similar views in more detail. To be precise, Kaiho
opined that the ancestors of the 'eta' had been of 'barbarian seed' (iteki no tane
夷狄の種). Okiura Kazuteru suggests that in all probability, given that Kaiho
claimed that their ancestors surrendered to Japanese forces long ago, he had in

43 This paragraph is based on Kikuchi Isao 菊池勇夫, Happōshi no naka no kinsei Nihon 『北方
44 'Musashino zatsudan' 『武蔵野雑談』, cited in Kikuchi Sansai 菊池山裁, Senjū minzoku to sen
minzoku no kenkyū 『先住民族と隣民族の研究』 (東京: 論話社, 1995), p. 130.
317. Tani was a rabid sinophobe; he is best known today as an educational deity: his grave in
Kochi prefecture has become a pilgrimage site for students praying for success in school and
university entrance examinations.
mind the northeastern ‘Ezo’.\textsuperscript{46} Whereas their absolute barbarity (Kaiho says literally that they were ‘practically the same as beasts’, \textit{kinjū dōzen} 禽獸同然) formerly allowed people to identify them visually, he regretted that hundreds of years on, ‘their descendants have acclimatized to our land. As they have grown up on our land and water, it is no longer possible to distinguish between good people and \textit{eta}.’ In response to this problem, Kaiho suggested tattooing some identifying mark on the foreheads of people of ‘eta’ status.\textsuperscript{47}

Tetsuo Najita has characterized Kaiho as a man who believed that, ‘From the highest to the lowest all were human beings’. In effect, he was of the opinion that Japanese aristocrats, beggars and ‘\textit{hinin}’ had common natures.\textsuperscript{48} He also indicated that Dutch, Ryūkyūan and Korean people had similar natures to Japanese people, despite the fact that they did not descend from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, and consequently were of different stock. However, people of ‘\textit{eta}’ status, Kaiho claimed, despite having become physically indistinguishable from Japanese people, retained a different internal spirit (\textit{kokoro 心}) that rendered them ignorant of concepts such as good and evil. He linked this problem to the fact that they were not descended from Amaterasu and as a result had no conception of the importance of pollution and purity. Because of this, and so as to enable people to avoid contact with them, Kaiho argued that they ought to be rendered identifiable by artificial external stigma.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} Okiura Kazuteru, ‘\textit{Kaisetsu}’, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{49} Kaiho, ‘\textit{Zenchūdan}’, pp. 253-256.
Akin to Sorai, Kaiho used Confucian teachings, in his case to argue for the existence of an almost universal human nature, only to draw on Shinto-inspired notions to deny that quality to people of 'eta' status. Kaiho’s peculiarity was that with the assistance of ‘foreign ancestry’, he rendered their subordinate social status into an inalterable nature tied to their non-Japanese descent.\(^5\)

The notion that ‘eta’ had ancestral ties to ‘Ezo’ acquired some popularity among intellectuals. In a work completed in 1837 and published in 1843, the Nativist scholar Kodera Kiyoyuki (1770-1843) argued that ‘eta’ were descended from long-ago ‘Ezo’ prisoners of war. Having captured their ancestors in battle, the Japanese court had thereafter dispersed them across the country to prevent them from revolting, he claimed.\(^1\) A decade later in 1847, Hoashi Banri (1778-1852), one of the foremost scholars of his time, concurred with Kodera’s account. ‘The so-called eta of today are the descendants of a type of barbarian who formerly lived in Ōu’ (奥羽, far northeastern Honshū), Banri stated. The court had brought ‘Ezo’ prisoners of war captured in that region back to the west, whereupon their disorderly behaviour caused the emperor to have them dispersed around the various provinces, and they became known first as the Saekibe (佐伯

\(^5\) Obviously, Kaiho’s view was at odds with the suggestion by Bakufu surveyors in the late-eighteenth century that ‘Ezo’ and ‘Japanese’ people had common ancestors. See Kojima Kyōko 小島兼子, ‘Esunishiti no hara—18-19 seiki no Ainu minzoku’ 「エスニシティの頃—18-19世紀のアイヌ民族」, in Kuroda Hiroko and Nagano Hiroko (eds.) 黒田弘子・長納平子編, Esunishiti / jendâ kara miru Nihon no rekishi 『エスニシティ・ジェンダーからみる日本の歴史』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 2002), pp. 71-72. Hayashi Shihei likewise argued that the main difference between the peoples of Japan and Ezochi lay in the fact that the latter had yet to be edified by the teachings of sages as the former had. See Wakabayashi, Anti-foreignism, pp. 74-75.

一部，a name of an ancient guild that provided the king with guards, and which reputedly incorporated many ‘Ezo’), and later as ‘eta’.52

These accounts were based on old Japanese texts. The Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan) recorded that in the second century CE, during the reign of the monarch Keiko, ‘Yemishi’ or ‘Yezo’ rebelled against the Yamato court, and the monarch’s son, Yamatodake no Mikoto, set off to pacify them. The ‘Yemishi’ were afraid and submitted to him, so the story goes, whereupon Yamatodake made their chieftains first into prisoners, and later into his own personal attendants.53 But upon being brought back to the west, these new vassals turned out to be unruly. In consequence, the emperor declared that ‘the Yemishi who were placed beside the sacred mountain [Mimoro-yama54] have by nature the hearts of beasts’, and dubbing them the Saekibe, had them relocated to Harima (Hyogo), Sanuki (Kagawa), Iyo (Ehime), Aki (Hiroshima), and Awa (Tokushima).55

Driven by Confucian influences, great scholarly interest in Japanese history emerged during the seventeenth century, notes Peter Nosco. Unsurprisingly, such work demonstrated considerable overlap with Nativist concerns.56 Nativist scholars held old texts such as the Nihongi and the Kojiki to be among the most important records of indigenous lore and customs prior to

54 The sacred mount of Mimoro was in the province of Izumo along the northern coast of Western Japan: its status was related to the fact that the deity Susanowo was reputed to have spent a night there. Izumo Fudoki, translated and introduced by Michiko Yamaguchi Aoki (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971), p. 141.
55 Nihongi, pp. 211-212.
56 Nosco, Remembering paradise, pp. 43-45.
Japan's contamination by foreign influences.57 The notion that 'eta' status people were innately and irredeemably bad contained in Kaiho's account of how the 'eta' came into being echoes the Nativist claims that Chinese people were innately bad, in contrast to Japanese people who were innately good. The latter accounts based on the Nihongi too, deny original 'Japanese' status to members of the 'eta' status group by turning them into late-comers, thereby tending to assure (invent) the original Japanese purity and goodness stressed by exponents of Nativism.

Apart from the fact that these claims of 'Ezo' origins hint at strong Nativist influences, we can add that they were perhaps also informed by records indicating that the Heian court relocated prisoners of the 'Ezo' wars to the west, especially from the eighth century into the ninth century, whereafter such people were frequently used in policing roles (as certain 'kawaramono' would be later).58 Scholarly awareness of such happenings may also have been a reason for these attempts to join 'eta' status people with 'Ezo' people. However, as Senshū Fujiatsu (1815-1864), a Bakumatsu royalist and the author of a late-Edo proposal to grant 'outcasts' commoner status, pointed out, no evidence suggests that those


who submitted to court authority were subjected to permanent social
differentiation.\textsuperscript{59}

Lastly, it is suggestive that such theories appeared in the context of
growing calls for Japan to colonize Ezochi, both to forestall the threat of Western
invasion, and also to gain economic profit (see chapter four on these plans). One
can speculate that the association of the lowest strata of the Edo-period social
hierarchy and of the inhabitants of Ezochi encouraged a perception of the latter
as an inferior and subservient population whose governance it was incumbent
upon the Japanese to undertake, with a view to guiding them towards
civilization.

Korean craftsmen

During the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, the notion that the
descendants of Korean immigrants had become current-day ‘\textit{eta}’ also drew
intellectual interest. Almost all adherents of Korean origin theories referred to
the same basic story.\textsuperscript{60} Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the
folklorist Kitagawa Morisada (1810-18?) wrote that the ‘\textit{eta}’ were descended
from immigrants who arrived in Japan from the Korean peninsula late in the fifth

\textsuperscript{59} Senshū Fujiatsu 千秋藤篤, ‘Eta wo osamura no gi’ [穢多を治むるの議], probably mid-
1860s, in SHYH, pp. 41-43.
\textsuperscript{60} The officially Dutch (in fact German) medical doctor Philipp Frantz von Siebold (1796-1866)
recorded a variation, noting that the ‘\textit{eta}’ of the Kansai area through which he was then travelling
were probably descended from prisoners from the ‘last war’ with Korea. See Philipp Frantz von
Siebold, diary entry, 9/3/1826, in Shiboruto Edo sanpu kikō 『シーボルト江参府紀行』 (東京: 駿南社, 1928), p. 362. Presumably the local officials who accompanied him through each
domain on his journey to Edo transmitted this notion to him. His mention of the ‘last war’ with Korea probably refers to the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s invasion of the Korean
peninsula in the late-sixteenth century. But although large groups of Koreans and Chinese did
arrive, notably during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries (including Chinese
former prisoners of Wakō (倭寇) pirates, traders and scholars, and some fifty or sixty thousand
Korean prisoners of Hideyoshi’s invasions), they rapidly assimilated, and in any case post-dated
the ‘outcast’ groups. See Arano Yasunori 荒野泰典, ‘Nihongata kai chitsujo no keisei’ [日本型
華夷秩序の形成], in Asao et al. (eds.), \textit{Nihon no shakaishi}, vol. 1, pp. 196-203.
century CE, during the reign of the Ninken emperor. Uesugi Satoshi suggests that Kitagawa basically copied ideas contained in an early-nineteenth century work by the Confucian scholar Murase Kōtei (1746-1818). Murase proposed that ‘eta’ came from Korea and China, and that the term ‘eta’ was also written with the Chinese character combination ‘etta’ (越多) which, meaning ‘traverser’ (of borders), revealed their foreign roots. The two Nativist scholars, Ito Tsunetari (or Tsunetaru, 1774-1858) and his teacher Aoyagi Tanenobu (1766-1835) also made claims about Korean origins during the 1830s, likewise stating that ‘eta’ were descended from Korean tanners who had arrived during the time of the Ninken emperor.

These scholars based their assertions on accounts of interaction between the Yamato court and ancient kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. In particular, they relied on the Nihongi, which recorded that in 493 CE, a man named Hitaba no Kishi returned from the state of Koryō and delivered two artisans named Sunguki and Nonyuki to the Ninken emperor. They were the ancestors of the Koryo tanners of the village of Nakada in the district of Yamabe in the province of Yamato. People such as Kitagawa, Murase, Aoyagi and Ito evidently felt

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61 Kitagawa Morisada 喜多川守貞, Kinsei fūzokushi 『近世風俗誌』(京都: 村山書房, 1934), p. 201. Kitagawa wrote this text between 1837 and 1853, correcting and adding to it until 1867.
63 See Hyaku Sui 碧水, ‘Iwayuru eta no kongen ni tsuite’ 「所謂えたの根源に就いて」, Meiji no Hikari 『明治の光』, February 1913, p.38.
65 Nihongi, p. 397. (There is an unattributed reference to ‘fleshers’—presumably butchers—being brought back to Japan earlier in the fifth century in Wontack Hong, Paekche of Korea and the origins of Yamato Japan (Seoul: Kudara International, 1994), p. 56.)
this briefly recorded arrival in Japan of two craftsmen late in the fifth century could be taken to mark the genesis of the ‘eta’ status group.

Their claim was unconvincing. Okamoto Yasutaka (1797-1878), a Nativist scholar from a high-ranking samurai family that had fallen on hard times circumspectly noted—surely thinking of his own family circumstances—that even if ancient records stated that Korean leatherworkers had arrived in Japan, there was no reason to think that their descendants had been confined to lowly positions ever since.66 As Imanishi Hajime has observed more recently, claims that ‘eta’ came from Korea, like other Edo-period assertions that ‘eta’ were foreign, relied on dubious interpretations of unreliable records.67

Aside from again using old texts to deny original belonging to members of the ‘eta’ status group (and thus ensuring the original goodness of Japanese), in the fact that it came to prominence as plans to invade the Korean peninsula were undergoing a renaissance and stimulating renewed expressions of ruling class antipathy towards that area and its inhabitants, this theory again echoed international relations of the moment.68 In a manner resembling the association between claims that ‘eta’ were originally ‘Ezo’ and plans for the colonization of Ezochi, colonial ambitions toward Korea were perhaps encouraged by the association of Koreans with ‘eta’ status people.

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Overall, Edo-period claims that people of 'eta' status had foreign origins, whether 'Chinese', 'Ezo' or 'Korean', were not founded on convincing evidence. Indeed, they tended to have little basis, and to ignore inconvenient historical records. Their purveyors appear to have been primarily interested in justifying prejudices against people of 'eta' status, in fostering prejudices against the lands with which they linked the 'eta' status group, and in establishing that ancient Japan had indeed been a pure land of good people prior to the infiltration of corrupting foreign elements. By representing 'eta' status people to have ancestral ties with certain foreigners, these intellectuals placed those entities into a mutually supporting and reinforcing relation. To be more precise, antipathy towards 'eta' status people was justified with reference to their 'foreign origins', and antipathy towards foreigners was simultaneously encouraged and justified with reference to their links to people of 'eta' status.

Emerging parallel to the development of a unified market economy and in accompaniment to increasing physical and intellectual contact with foreign people and countries, assertions that 'eta' status people were foreign signalled the growth of a sense among the Japanese intelligentsia that their country was (or should be) a unified economic, political and social unit whose residents felt (or should feel) a common sense of being Japanese. The suggestion was that Japanese people would manifest such a sense of belonging in the form of antipathy towards people of foreign lands. Claims that 'eta' had foreign ancestry helped in the construction of a new criterion for moral consideration, namely, being 'native', or Japanese.
Popular views of the foreign

Contemporary estimates of the reach of Edo-period claims that ‘eta’ had foreign origins vary considerably. Morita Yoshinori proposes that most Edo-period scholars of such matters saw the ancestors of this status group to have been the ‘etori’ of ancient times.\(^69\) With more conviction, Kikuchi Sansai stated ‘The scholars of the Edo period all accepted the etori theory’.\(^70\)

In contrast, Uesugi Satoshi argues that by the end of the Edo period, theories about their foreign origins were the dominant account of how the ‘eta’ came into being.\(^71\) Yoshida Satoshi takes a similar position. ‘The ignorant and prejudiced Confucianists and Nativists who taught at domainal and temple schools widely propagated theories of foreign descent’. The educated elites of the time, Yoshida writes, transmitted those ‘mistaken theories’ to the common people all around the country, thereby heightening prejudices against people of ‘eta’ status.\(^72\) Similarly, Watanabe Hiroshi has proposed that the Bakufu’s longstanding policy of limiting foreign contacts made the population strongly xenophobic, and that the spread of claims about ‘eta’ status people having foreign origins reflected popular anti-foreignism.\(^73\)

Those who claim that such theories were influential assume that foreign ancestry would have meant something significant to the populace. Taking a more nuanced position, Fujino Yutaka suggests that in the Meiji period, while the intellectual classes might have had a vague notion that outcasts were foreign, the

\(^69\) Morita, ‘Edoki ni okeru buraku’ , p. 312.
\(^70\) Kikuchi Sansai 菊池山哉, NHon no tokushu buraku, köhen 『日本の特殊部落後編』(東京: 東京史談会, 1961), p. 841.
\(^71\) Uesugi, Meiji Ishin to senmin haishirei , pp. 9-10.
\(^72\) Yoshida Satoshi 吉田誠, Dōwa mondai no rekishi to ninshiki—Bakumatsu / Ishinko sabetsu no jitta 『同和問題の歴史と認識—幕末·維新期の差別の実態』(東京: 明石書店, 1989), pp. 34, 60.
masses maintained customary practices involving exclusion and denigration. In effect, while people in or aligned with the late-Edo and early-Meiji ruling classes may well have possessed strong prejudices against foreigners, it is unclear that the majority of the population would have shared such clear-cut sentiments. Most people resided in rural or semi-rural agricultural communities with little contact with real or metaphorical foreigners, and it is doubtful whether they saw themselves to be Japanese, let alone if they would have seen meaningful moral distinctions between a person from a far-off province and from overseas.

During the last years of the Edo period, for example, Hiroshima domain officials even expressed fears that locals would prefer foreigners to themselves and rise up in alliance with them against the domain government, and talked of the need for measures to secure popular confidence. The fact that it was not uncommon for late-Edo and early-Meiji people of ‘eta’ status to assert that they had foreign origins makes it clear that in their eyes too, ‘foreignness’ was not (yet) an undesirable attribute. In his 1870 petition to the Kyoto authorities asking that they cease using the term ‘eta’ to refer to them, the Rendaino village (Kyoto) headman Gannemon repeated the story of ‘Ezo’ origins and how long-ago prisoners of war had been dispersed around western

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Japan. Ganemon’s document, which asserted the many merits of ‘eta’ status people, in no way indicated that he considered ‘Ezo’ descent to be a negative attribute. ‘Buraku’ communities elsewhere have handed down stories about foreign origins that likewise do not indicate strong anti-foreign prejudices.

In some instances, ‘ordinary’ people also acted in ways that, although involving violence towards people of ‘eta’ status, suggested that they did not regard such people to be foreign in any significant way. Inflamed by a variety of rumours, a series of peasant riots erupted in the Chūgoku and Shikoku regions during the early-Meiji years. People said that the new government, in league with ‘strangers’ (ijin 異人, i.e. Westerners), planned to exsanguinate women and drink their blood. Rulers were going to take away the women and children and cattle and deliver them unto their new foreign masters. In 1873, rioters in Okayama’s Mimasaka area, in large part motivated by anxiety about such ‘strangers’, attacked communities inhabited by people formerly of ‘eta’ status. But these peasants did not think that ‘new commoners’ were in some way foreign. On the contrary, their attacks were motivated by the fact that ‘new commoners’ had determined to give up their former occupations in the wake of the abolition

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77 Ganemon 元右衛門, ‘Omei haishi seigansho’ 『汚名廃止請願書』, January 1870, in KNBS: 6, pp. 125-127. See also chapter five.

78 Inoue Teizō reported that in Hyogo prefecture, many villages handed down stories about the genesis of their own communities that referred to Chinese, Korean and other immigrants. Inoue Teizō 井上貞蔵, ‘Hinminkutsu to shōsū dōhō’ 『貧民窟と少数同胞』, 1923, in NSSS: 25, pp. 747-748. In Kobayashi Takehiro’s view, this kind of ‘internal differentiation’ from the Japanese masses contained no nuances of exclusion or denigration, but rather ‘constituted a mechanism for constructing their own subjectivity’. Kobayashi Takehiro 小林太雄, “Tokushu buraku” ninshiki ni okeru közō to shutai’ 『特殊部落』認識における構造と主体』, Gendai Shisō 『現代思想』, vol. 27, no. 2, February 1999, p. 111. See also Kobayashi Takehiro 小林太雄, ‘Kishu rıyūibanashi no fōkuro—kindai “burakumin” no jiko ninshiki’ 『貴種流離譚のフォーチュア—近代『部落民』の自己認識』, Buraku Kaimō 『部落解放』, vol. 456, August 1999, pp. 64-71.

79 Talk of an exsanguination policy was linked to the introduction of military service, which some officials had termed a ‘blood tax’ (ketsuzei 血税). This infelicitous phrase apparently meshed with local legends about evil beings stealing and consuming fat and blood. Imanishi, Kindai nihon no sabetsu, pp. 119-126.
decree. Local ‘eta’ status people had helped maintain local order. Faced with a potential crisis, peasants wanted them to continue to do so, and specifically to deal with these shadowy foreign threats. To that end, they had forcibly tried to make ‘new commoners’ review their decision to change occupations.80

That there was a degree of anti-foreign sentiment among the population during the last years of the Edo period is undeniable. But, as Maruyama Masao suggested, one should avoid overestimating the extent of xenophobia or anti-foreign sentiment. In his view, most ordinary or common people were friendly towards the newly visible Westerners. Maruyama argued that because of the historically subordinate position of the people, they did not identify with the state in a manner that would have caused them to feel antipathy towards Westerners.81

With regard to ‘Asian’ foreigners, people are likewise said to have displayed both friendly curiosity and occasional animosity.82 Of the several thousand Chinese people resident in the port city of Nagasaki, most ‘were seen as having transferred their allegiance to Japan’, and as their places of residence


81 Maruyama Masao 丸山真男, Chūsei to hangyaku—tenkeiki Nihon no seishinteki isō 『忠誠と反逆—近世形態日本の精神的立場』(東京: 筑摩書房, 1992), pp. 203-204. Of course, Maruyama’s work tends to underestimate popular learning and subjectivity, and as notably Irokawa Daikichi has pointed out, numerous peasants and townspeople took a keen interest in ‘state’ affairs during the late-Edo period. Irokawa Daikichi, The culture of the Meiji period (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 44-47. But the interest displayed by elite members of the commoner strata is nevertheless insufficient to suggest that the masses identified with their state in a fashion that would arouse mass antipathy towards certain foreigners and their states. Rather, popular antipathy emerged when, for example, people in Edo identified ‘foreigners’ as the root cause of rising rice prices and of their own economic difficulties. See Minami Kazuo 南和男, Bakumatsu Edo shakai no kenkyū 『幕末江戸社会の研究』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 1978), pp. 297-298; and Fukawa Kiyoshi 布川清司, Kinsei chōnin shisōshi kenkyū—Edo, Ōsaka, Kyōto chōnin no bōi 『近世町人思想史研究—江戸・大阪・京都町人の場合』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 1983), pp. 68-69.

were relatively unrestricted, they 'gradually melted into the general population'. Noriko Kamachi has written that 'Japanese popular sentiment toward the resident Chinese during the early-Meiji period was a mixture of amity, envy, resentment, and contempt'. Given the high incidence of intermarriages, unofficial alliances and adoptions that she also mentions, however, feelings of amity appear to have been of considerable strength. In light of the rather different situations of actual Chinese people and actual 'eta' status people in late-Edo and early-Meiji Japan, claims about 'Chinese' 'eta' origins clearly would have faced problems of credibility.

The situation with regard to Koreans was broadly similar. Kimura Kan suggests that 'sites where the people of the Edo period could interact with "Korea" were extremely few in reality, and consequently, people tended to be prejudiced both for and against it.' The only direct acquaintance with Koreans available to most people would be their sightings of the colourful processions formed by Korean diplomatic missions travelling to and from Edo. Fascination appears to have been the main response to these missions, of which it was said that if one were fortunate, one might see two in a lifetime. In terms of texts and

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86 Terauchi, '18 seiki no higashi Ajia', p. 136. Edo-period intellectuals esteemed Korean learning and culture, and enthusiastic members of the literati overran the lodging places of Korean delegations. See Nakao Hiroshi 仲尾宏, Chōsen tsūshinshi no kiseki—zenkindai no Nihon to Chōsen 『朝鮮通信使の軌跡—前近代の日本と朝鮮』 (東京: 明石書店, 1989), p. 290. The cost of these diplomatic exchanges saw their frequency decline; the last such Korean mission to Japan came in 1811. The situation of Satsuma domain (Kagoshima) was rather particular. Although Chinese and Korean prisoners of war, intellectuals and craftsmen and others who had arrived elsewhere in Japan during the early-seventeenth century quickly assimilated, Satsuma policy was to maintain barriers between Korean potters and others in the Naoshirogawa area.
images, Ronald Toby points out that scrolls and prints and so forth depicting images of these foreign missions were immensely popular, and that people eagerly held ‘foreigners parades’ and constructed elaborate Korean floats to display at their annual festivals, not just in enjoyment of the exotic, but also as a means of claiming higher status or prestige than that which they enjoyed in everyday life.\(^8^7\) Popular enthusiasm for things Korean was worlds apart from popular aversion to contact with people of the ‘eta’ status group.

Looking forward, although there was strong localized friction between working class Japanese and Chinese people in port cities such as Kobe and Yokohama from the third Meiji decade onwards,\(^8^8\) strong prejudices against residents of Korea and China were imparted to the masses only during two wars of the late-nineteenth century and the early-twentieth century.\(^8^9\) The first-hand experiences of the soldiers who went to fight in the Sino-Japanese (1894-95) and

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Thus there was a distinct Korean presence there. See Seki Shōichi 関周一，‘Nihon retto / Chōsen hantō no iminoku—hiryo Chōsenjin / Chūgokujin to Wajin’ 「日本列島・朝鮮半島の異民族—被虐朝鮮人・中国人と倭人」, in Kuroda and Nagano (eds.), Esunishiti / jenđō, pp. 37-40. Tsushima domain also maintained trade relations with the Korean peninsula during the Edo period, with constant comings and goings. See Ronald P. Toby. ‘Reopening the question of sakoku: diplomacy in the legitimation of the Tokugawa bakufu’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, summer 1977, p. 326.


\(^8^8\) On Kobe, see Nunokawa Hiroshi 布川弘, ‘Toshi “kasō shakai” no keisei to nashonarizumu’ 「都市『下層社会』の形成とナショナリズム」, *Nihonshi Kenkyū 『日本史研究』*, vol. 355, March 1992, pp. 101-103. Based on ‘feelings of rivalry and jealousy’, members of the labouring classes protested so effectively against Chinese unskilled labour that they caused the government to exclude Chinese labourers from the decree legalizing the mixed residence of foreigners (naichi zakkyo 内地雑居) in 1899. See also Kazuki Sato, ‘The dilemma of Kanbun in modern Japan’, in Dikötter, *The construction of racial identities*, pp. 122-123.

Russo-Japanese (1904-05) wars ‘served to diffuse and fix an image of condescension and even contempt for the sectors of the continent their presence had helped to blight’. 90 The prejudices that soldiers acquired in war joined with those that people developed at home through the influence of media reports, paintings, songs, plays, school lessons and so forth, and a sense of superiority towards ‘Asia’ and its inhabitants pervaded the population. 91 This trend continued during the last years of the Meiji period, when Japanese control over Korea tightened and Japanese writers represented the dominant Korean traits to be ‘dirtiness’, ‘danger’, and overall ‘backwardness’. 92

Popular attitudes towards ‘Ezo’ varied considerably. There is one well-known expression of popular attitudes towards ‘Ezo’ people dating to the mid-eighteenth century. Suggesting a degree of popular antipathy, peasants in northern Honshū’s Fukushima area complained during the so-called Hikouchi uprising of 1749 that the Bakufu’s local representative ‘thinks of us as though we are no different to Ezo’. 93 All the same, we must also note that there are suggestions that other northern peasants, as well as intellectuals such as Andō

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90 Jansen, Japan and its world, p. 66. See also Irokawa Daikichi 色川大吉, ‘Kindai minshū shisō no ni san no mondai’ 「近代民衆思想史の二, 三の問題」, in Irokawa Daikichi (ed.) 色川大吉編, Minshū bunka no genryū—higashi kuni no kodai kara kindai he 『民衆文化の源流—東国の古代から近代へ』 (東京: 平凡社, 1980), pp. 290-293.
Shōeki, idealized the reputedly classless and untaxed society of the ‘Ezo’.
Opinions were clearly disparate; it is difficult to say whether the masses elsewhere had any strong and clear sense about ‘Ezo’ people or Ezochi.

At any rate, the influence of theories about ‘eta’ status people having foreign origins temporarily waned in the face of strong denials of the significance of foreign descent by early-Meiji elites. This caused a brief hiatus during the 1870s, during which time recorded claims linking former ‘eta’ status people with foreigners became scarce.

From universal humanity towards foreign types

During the so-called ‘civilization and enlightenment’ period of the 1870s and early 1880s, intellectuals and representatives of the new Meiji government made numerous assertions of human similarity or equality. Not surprisingly, such statements often referred to ‘outcast’-related issues.

The authors of an 1870 Kyoto prefecture submission to the ruling Council of State argued for the abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups. They denied that the rumoured immigrant descent of ‘eta’ status people should determine their social position. In the context of civilization and enlightenment and friendly foreign relations, ‘even were they to prove to be of a foreign species [gaikoku no shurui 外国の種類], that would not be cause to despise them’. As they had long since been assimilated, the authors stated, in the present, ‘eta’ were unquestionably ‘people of the kingly land’ (ōdo no tami 王土の民).

After emancipation, officials and intellectuals used the same logic to explain to the populace why the government had elevated ‘outcasts’ to

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95 *Kyōto fu kengen 京都府建言*, 18/12/1870, in KNBS: 6, pp. 36-37.
commoner status. Fukuyama prefecture officials announced, 'Although various stories are handed down about how the ancestors of *eta*, *chasen* and *hinin* and their like originally came from overseas, they [...] are unquestionably human, and it is a natural principle that those who are human should interact amicably'.

Kochi prefecture officials made a virtually identical statement. Yokokawa Akitoshi provided a similar interpretation of emancipation in his popular 1873 educational text, 'Doorway to enlightenment'. He explained that it was not important whether outcasts were of 'Korean' or 'Ezo' descent. 'There is no difference between humans', Yokokawa stated, provided only that one demonstrated loyalty to the emperor and dutifully paid one's taxes.

These notions followed on logically from the government's development of friendly relations with people of Western countries. That rendered untenable the denigration of a part of the population on the grounds of foreign descent. The expansion of foreign relations also undermined the occupational or pollution-related basis for denigration. Many scholars had reinforced their theories of foreign origins by adding that necessity had forced immigrants into the 'lowliest' and most 'polluted' occupations such as leather- and meat-related trades. Those explanations implied that denigration was a function of 'polluted' occupations as much as of descent. But as Nishimura Kanefumi pointed out, the fact that the Westerners with whom officials were developing friendly relations were carnivores eroded this basis for denigration too.

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96 Fukuyama ken kokuyu 福山県告諭, 10/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 415.
97 Kōchi ken kokuyu 高知県告諭, undated, in KBSS: 1, pp. 449-452.
98 Yokokawa Akitoshi 横河秋晴, 'Kaika no iriguchi' 「開化の入口」, December 1873, in MBZ: 20, p. 58.
99 See, for example, Nishimura, 'Kaika no hon', p. 430; and Okabe Keigorō 岡部啓吾, 'Kaika hyōrin' 「開化評林」, September 1875, in MBZ: 20, p. 237.
Aside from statements about the insignificance of ‘foreignness’, early-Meiji intellectuals also made frequent claims about some form of universal human nature. This echoed not just the influence of Western ideas about natural rights, but also hinted at a more thorough application of the Confucian notion of a universal human nature. Thus, in his early-Meiji enlightenment phase, Kato Hiroyuki drew upon a notion of ‘natural rights’ to denounce the ‘inhuman treatment’ of beings whose common humanity was indisputable, and advocated the emancipation of ‘outcast’ status people.\(^{100}\) In a similar vein, Fukuzawa Yukichi wrote that whatever the external conditions of their lives, ‘all men are equal […] in essential human rights’.\(^{101}\) The prominent Freedom and Popular Rights activist Ueki Emori also expounded in 1874 on the identical natures of human beings and the fundamental insignificance of one’s origins. ‘Since medieval times, there have been people called *eta*. Whether they are a foreign race [*gaikoku jinshu* 外国人種] or a domestic one [*naishu* 內種], their origins are still unclear. But their bodies and minds are absolutely human, and not animal, insect or fish.’\(^{102}\)

But less abstract visions tying the enjoyment of rights with national belonging surfaced alongside these statements about some kind of universal humanity (chapter five considers the association of rights and duties in more detail). The frequent announcements that government officials and intellectuals

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101 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An encouragement of learning*, translated by David A. Dilworth and Umeyo Hirano (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1969), p. 10. According to David Dilworth’s introduction to this work, 3.4 millions of copies in seventeen printings were produced during Fukuzawa’s lifetime.

made about trading popular rights for duties clearly helped this notion to spread and become influential. To take a few examples, the Fukuoka prefecture governor, Yasuba Yasukazu (1835-1899), declared that former 'outcasts' were Japanese subjects who therefore possessed 'natural human rights', while the Niigata Shinbun deplored the fact that even though 'new commoners' were 'the same Japanese', people excluded them from the local school. From the position that rights were natural and universal, ideas about rights being tied to the quality of being Japanese became dominant. Implying as they did that it was legitimate to treat non-nationals as lesser beings, such ideas had negative repercussions for those whose national belonging was alleged to be uncertain.

As the influence of such ideas waxed during the 1880s, theories about 'new commoners' having foreign origins began to emerge. The phenomenon of strong social prejudices against 'new commoners' brought many observers to seek after reasons for their plight. Heightened interest in the differences between 'foreigners' and Japanese, as well as in vague ideas about 'nations' and 'races', saw officials and journalists describe the social divide between 'new commoners' and 'others' as a 'racial' phenomenon.

In 1878, Saitama prefecture officials characterized the antagonistic relations between commoners and 'new commoners' in a local district as analogous to relations between people of 'separate types and different species' (besshu irui 別種異類). Likewise, a reporter for the Yomiuri newspaper commented that the ostracism of new commoners indicated that many people

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103 ‘Yasuba Yasukazu dan' 「安場保和談」, Fukuryō Shinpō 『福陵新報』, 6 September 1890, in KBSS: 3, pp. 388-9. Yasuba was a prominent Meiji bureaucrat. As well as holding a seat in the House of Peers, he served as governor of Aichi, Fukushima, Fukuoka, and Hokkaido prefectures.

104 'Shinheimin shitei no bengaku' 「新平民子弟の勉学」, Niigata Shinbun 『新潟新聞』, 10 May 1892, in KBSS: 3, p. 126.

105 Shinbun Shūshi 『新聞雑誌』, November 1878, in KBSS: 3, pp. 79-80.
thought the ‘era’ were ‘a special kind of human race’ (isshu tokubetsu no jinshu一一種特別的人種). In 1888, a Shinonome Shinbun journalist described some of the visible aspects of dire poverty in a ‘new commoner’ community, and concluded that to look at the residents was akin to observing someone of a ‘different human species’ (ishu no jinrui異種の人類). In light of this tendency for commentators to ascribe a ‘racial’ character to the ‘new commoner’ situation, it is unsurprising that some began to express the idea that ‘new commoners’ were ‘foreign’ in more explicit fashion.

Incidentally, such claims did not just involve taking poverty, denigration and memories of former ‘untouchable’ status as indicators of ‘foreignness’. They also relied on certain customary factors. There was a widespread and to some extent well-founded notion that the ‘new commoner’ population had particular customs of its own. As Minegishi Kentarō has pointed out, ‘there were evident differences between discriminated peoples and others in pre-modern times’. Watanabe Toshio more recently has suggested that those specificities would have revolved principally around diet and religion. Of course, the significance of any ‘new commoner’ particularities did not lie in the fact that the rest of the

107 Osaka no betsu sekai 「大阪の別世界’, Shinonome Shinbun 『東雲新聞』, 3 April 1888, in KBSS: 3, pp. 240-241. This claim was supported by claims about the prevalence of physical disability and stunted growth, different skin colour, and so on.
108 Similar processes unfolded in China, where ‘Confucian social hierarchies underwent a permutation into new racial taxonomies: binary distinctions between “superior races” (liangzhong [良種]) and “inferior races” (jianzhong [賤種]) were often extrapolated from existing social hierarchies which had divided “common people” (liangmin [良民]) from “mean people” (jianmin [賤民]) in China until their legal abolition by the Yongzheng emperor in 1723 (social discrimination persisted until the twentieth century).’ Frank Dikötter, ‘Introduction’, in Dikötter, The construction of racial identities, pp. 6-7. See also Frank Dikötter, The discourse of race in modern China (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1992), pp. 80-81.
population was unified and homogeneous, which naturally it was not. Rather, it resided in the fact that people utilized claims about ‘new commoner’ cultural specificities in attempts to exclude them from their social sphere with the intention of protecting their own interests.

This practice became visible in the 1880s, when the government began laying the groundwork for a new regional administration system (Chōsonsei 町村制) that would entail the amalgamation of smaller rural villages to create larger, rationalized administrative entities. In preparing to implement that new system, the Shiga prefecture authorities ordered local village headmen to report on the areas under their authority, and to clarify any factors that might compromise the system’s successful implementation. In response, virtually all village headmen reported with regard to local ‘new commoner’ communities that their amalgamation into larger administrative units otherwise comprised of ‘regular’ villages would be undesirable. They typically claimed that ‘new commoner’ villages were ‘backward and poverty-stricken’ (mikai no hinson 未開の貧村), and that residents engaged in different occupations and had different ‘customs and mores’.111

Motivated by the desire to maintain customary social divisions, as well as to avoid the possibility of having to share local finances with ‘new commoners’, people in Kyoto,112 Nara,113 Osaka,114 and Tokyo115 made similar claims about

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111 See, for example, Fujino Genpei (headman of Shimoeda village, Aichi district, Shiga prefecture), report to Aichi district head, 13 August 1888, in ‘Shiga ken gappei shiryō’ [滋賀県合併資料], in KBSS: 3, p. 520.
112 Kyōto fu futatsu 京都府布達, 21 April 1883, in KNBS: 6, p. 59.
113 ‘Isson sanko gonin no dokuritsu jichisei'「一村三戸五人の独立自治制」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 8 November 1888, in KBSS: 3, p. 329.
114 Ōsaka fu Tanboku gun yonkason gansho 大阪府丹北郡四ヶ村願書, (petition to district offices), December 1888, in KBSS: 3, pp. 248-250.
the cultural particularities of ‘new commoners’, determining them to be people who had been historically estranged from the rest of the population, and who had their own customs and modes of behaviour. The existence of certain customary ‘specificities’, which could be taken as markers of ‘foreignness’, were presumably also factors in the emergence of claims about ‘new commoners’ being of foreign ancestry.

Remnant populations

Concerned with identifying the nature of ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ (especially colonial) populations, scholars in emerging disciplines such as ethnology and anthropology kicked off the modernization of theories about the origins of ‘new commoners’ in the Meiji period. Among them was the pre-eminent figure of early Japanese anthropology, Tsuboi Shōgorō (1863-1913).

Tsuboi was a one-time student of the US biologist Edward Morse at Tokyo Imperial University. Morse, like many of the Western scholars in Japan during the Meiji period, had taken a keen interest in the origins of the Japanese, and constructed a kind of race replacement theory according to which the contemporary Japanese had displaced the Ainu, who before them had displaced a pre-Ainu population.116

Morse evidently transmitted his interest in this unknown pre-Ainu population to Tsuboi Shōgorō, who, studying Ainu legends, became intrigued by mention of a diminutive hole-dwelling non-Ainu people known as ‘koropokkuru’. Tsuboi decided that this little-known group might have been that

unknown pre-Ainu population. While he never made explicit claims about the matter, there are hints that Tsuboi at one stage hoped that some former ‘outcasts’ might prove to be a remnant ‘koropokkuru’ population.

In a speech he gave to the Tokyo Anthropological Society in 1886, Tsuboi reported that during the course of an archaeological dig in the Ashikaga area, he had discovered that local former ‘outcasts’ manifested some linguistic differences and were shunned by others. More to the point, he announced that they dug subterranean chambers. ‘When winter comes, they dig a round hole in the garden and put a roof on it’, using this as a workspace for leatherwork and sandal making. One can speculate that Tsuboi’s interest in hole-dwelling ‘outcasts’ was related to his interest in the mythical troglodytes known as ‘koropokkuru’. Tsuboi’s imaginings went no further, however, and he thereafter appears to have written nothing more about possible links between ‘outcasts’, ‘new commoners’, and remnant indigenous populations. Indeed, in an interview with the ‘buraku’ rights activist Okamoto Wataru some decades later, Tsuboi unambiguously declared that ‘buraku’ residents and Japanese people were of the same ‘race’.

Other scholars more explicitly tied ‘buraku’ residents to indigenous non-Ainu populations. In a long 1902 treatise on agricultural policy, Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the most celebrated Japanese folklorist and anthropologist of the

118 The first Japanese anthropological society, the ‘Friends of Anthropology’, was formed around Tsuboi Shōgorō in 1884, and it evolved into the Tokyo Anthropological Society in 1886. Shimizu Akitoshi 清水昭俊, ‘Nihon ni okeru kindai jinruigaku no keisei to tenkai’ 「日本における近代人類学の形成と展開」, in Shinohara Tōru (ed.) 篠原徹編, Kindai Nihon no tashū to jigaizō 『近代日本の人種学と自画像』(東京: 拡書房, 2001), p. 239.
120 Okamoto, Tokushū buraku no kaihō, pp. 265-267.
The twentieth century, suggested that 'eta' were not descended from the same stock as modern Japanese people.\(^{121}\) Yanagita argued that the ancestors of modern Japanese were agriculturalists who had immigrated from the south. The southerners’ general lack of attachment to such things as skins and pelts, which they had no use for in warmer southern climes, was transformed into a strong aversion towards such goods and people who dealt in them as a result of the establishment of religious interdictions on killing animals and eating their meat. Yanagita proposed that members of the 'eta' status group, who had been distinguished by their engagement in leather-related trades, were of a different 'ethno-cultural' type to other Japanese. They were 'probably a different race [\textit{betsu no minzoku 別の民族}] accustomed to grazing animals', a formerly nomadic group implicitly from colder northern areas who had only recently become sedentary. Yanagita thus pointed to the possibility that some 'buraku' residents might be related to the Ainu people, or to some other indigenous northern population.\(^{122}\)

He too, found little support for his notion that 'eta' were distinct from modern Japanese. And while he did not fully renounce it in his 1913 essay on 'buraku' types, in which he continued to argue that some were descended from a nomadic people, Yanagita did concede that, 'It is difficult to declare that they are of a foreign race' (\textit{ijinshu 異人種}).\(^{123}\)

\(^{121}\) Yanagita Kunio was born in Hyōgo prefecture, which had the highest proportion of 'buraku' residents per capita of any prefecture. He was also raised in the Harima area, where such communities were particularly common. Akisada Yoshikazu suggests that he would therefore have been personally familiar with prejudices against such people. Akisada, 'Kaisetsu', pp. 300-301.


\(^{123}\) Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男, 'Iwayuru tokushu buraku no shurui' (所謂特殊部落の種類), \textit{Kokka Gakkai Zasshi} 『国家学会雑誌』, vol. 27, no. 5, May 1913, in \textit{Teiho Yanagita Kunio shū}, vol. 27, pp. 376-384. For analysis of Yanagita’s work on 'buraku' matters, see Iwatsu Yōji.
Prominent ethnologists such as Kita Teikichi and Kikuchi Sansai went on to find links between people of ‘eta’ status and the Uilta people: the indigenous inhabitants of the Kuriles and Sakhalin/Karafuto. Kita Teikichi, whose concern with the prejudices people directed at ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ apparently began in his childhood, wrote in 1919 that the Uilta people would have inhabited much of the Japanese archipelago in pre-Ainu times, subsequently merging with incoming waves of migrants from the south. He argued that over time, people who engaged in ‘unclean’ occupations—a mix of ‘Japanese’, Uilta, and presumably others—became known as ‘eta’, which he proposed was an abbreviation of the term ‘uilta’ (‘ietta’). Though Kita considered ‘uilta’ to be the etymological origin of the term ‘eta’, we must stress that he did not argue that the Uilta people constituted the ‘racial’ origin of people of ‘eta’ status. In Kita’s opinion, the Japanese were a ‘racially mixed’ population, the ‘eta’ were the same as the Japanese, and he believed that racial factors were not a major cause of denigration in Japan anyway.

Kikuchi Sansai ‘reprised’ a modified version of the Uilta theory several years later. In contrast to Kita, Kikuchi stressed that ‘burakumin’ were the direct descendants of the Uilta. For him, the ‘buraku’ problem was a distinctly

126 Kita Teikichi 喜田貞吉, ‘Nihon minzoku to ha nanzōya’ 『日本民族とは何ぞや』, Minzoku To Rekishi 『民族と歴史』, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1919, pp. 1-10.
128 According to Koishikawa, Kita Teikichi probably ‘borrowed’ his theory about Uilta from an earlier unpublished work by Kikuchi. Koishikawa’s interpretation explains the similarities between the theories of Kita and Kikuchi, and also the fact that the hitherto cooperative relationship between the two scholars came to an acrimonious end. See Koishikawa Zenji 高橋金次, ‘Yomigaeru senjū minzoku kenkyū’ 『甦る先住民族研究』, appended to Kikuchi, Senjū minzoku, pp. 20-21 (from end of book).
'racial' matter. The indigenous inhabitants of Japan, he declared, were not the Ainu, but the Uilta people, most of whom had been incorporated into the Japanese. But in his view, those people that the Bakufu had singled out as 'eta' were the direct descendants of this indigenous people.  

Scholars who tried to tie 'new commoners' and 'burakumin' with indigenous 'non-Japanese' peoples constructed improbable theories. Their implausibility aside, however, these theories suggest how scholars, preoccupied with throwing some light on the 'cultural' and 'racial' make-up of the 'Japanese', turned some of their attention to 'new commoners', who were differentiated from the rest of the population by popular prejudices. In interpreting that social estrangement, scholars like Yanagita and Kikuchi hypothesized that 'eta' were probably descended from populations that differed from ordinary Japanese. Presuming that existing differences had existed for centuries if not millennia, they tended to confer the status of an ancient 'racially'- or 'ethnically'-founded tradition upon certain social divisions, and implied that social relations between ordinary Japanese people would necessarily be harmonious.

**Renascent Korean origin theories**

It is difficult to say with any certitude whether advocates of non-Japanese indigenous origins exerted much influence over 'public' opinion. In terms of longevity and frequency of citation, it appears that a Korean origin theory became dominant from the 1880s onwards, at least among claims that 'new commoners' were foreign.  

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129 Kikuchi, Senjū minzoku, pp. 429-430.  
130 Naturally, traces of the Edo-period assertions remained. The authors of a 1907 Mie prefecture report on 'buraku' matters joined old theories of 'Ezo' origins with theories of Korean origins. Dividing Mie prefecture 'buraku' residents into two populations, the authors claimed that those
In 1886, an obscure figure named Fujii Kansuke published an essay asserting that ‘eta’ status people were of Korean descent in the Tokyo Anthropological Society’s journal. His argument relied on the simplistic logic that since Japanese people despised both ‘eta’ and Koreans, there was undoubtedly a close relation between the two populations. Fujii’s premise was that, ‘while the eta are our comrades, people loathe them because their ancestors were originally of different race’. Fujii seized upon the point that immigrants had come from Korea in the distant past, and determined that they must have been the ancestors of the ‘eta’. ‘Being inferior, perhaps those immigrants have become extinct according to Darwin’s theory of evolution. Or, as I strongly suspect, perhaps they […] are the ancestors of that race which today we call eta’. In support of his notion, he noted that unlike Japanese, Koreans and ‘eta’ status people both ate meat.\[131\]

Some months later, another little-known figure, Kaneko Chō, published a similar claim in the Tokyo Anthropological Society’s bulletin. He proposed, as Murase Kötei had nearly a century previously, that the term ‘eta’ derived from

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131 Fujii Kansuke 藤井乾助, ‘Eta ha takokujin naru beshi’ 「特殊部落改善の便識」, March 1907, in MKBS, p. 43.

132 Fujii Kansuke 藤井乾助, ‘Eta ha takokujin naru beshi’ 「特殊部落改善の便識」, Tokyo Jinruigakkai Zasshi 『東京人類学会雑誌』, December 1886, in KBSS: 3, pp. 553-554. It is often said that Buddhist and Shinto prohibitions on killing and eating animals meant people ate little meat in pre-Meiji Japan. But Honda Yutaka touches on the many kinds of meat on sale in Tokyo markets at the beginning of the Meiji period, and notes also that late in the seventeenth century, Hikone domain was providing beef to the Tokugawa Bakufu in the guise of medical produce. Honda Yutaka 本田豊, Edo no hinin—buraku kenkyū no kōdai 『江戸の非人—部落研究の先端』 (東京: 三一書房, 1992), pp. 120-126. Looking at meat-eating and related taboos in Japan from a broader historical perspective, Harada Nobuo argues that the increasing frequency of interdictions on meat-eating saw that practice cease on official occasions around the late-sixteenth century, but that such limitations did not cause people to cease meat-eating in private. Harada Nobuo 原田信男, Rekishi no naka no kome to niku—shokunetsu to temō / sabetsu 『歴史の中の米と肉—食物と天皇・差別』 (東京: 平凡社, 1993), pp. 96, 117, 259. Meat-eating was especially common in the central and eastern parts of Japan, far from the emperor, his court, and its various rituals.
the term ‘etsudo’ (越人) or ‘traverser’, which referred to those taken prisoner by Japanese soldiers in Korea. Presumably he was thinking of the empress Jingu-led invasion of the Korean peninsula in the early-third century CE. Criminal (Japanese) women were added to their number, and their descendants became the ‘former eta’ of the Meiji years, Kaneko claimed.132

Such farfetched opinions were common at the time. Ohara Shinzō, a prominent ‘buraku’ reformer who would later become a colonial administrator in Korea, wrote that ‘burakumin’ were descended from Korean prisoners of war as well as from the servants of high-class Korean immigrants. ‘Not understanding the Japanese language and having different customs’, Ohara fantasized that their choice of occupation would have been limited to ‘lowly’ and ‘unclean’ ones. ‘Looking at the situation of the special people [tokushumin 特殊民] today, their pronunciation and speech are particular, they pay cleanliness no heed, and [...] there are not a few other ways in which they closely resemble Koreans.’ Consequently, Ohara determined, ‘This deduction [that outcasts were of Korean ancestry] must be close to the truth.’133

These theories were symptomatic of ‘persisting’ antipathy towards ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ and of deepening Japanese prejudices towards Koreans associated with the steady increase in the Japanese state’s influence over the Korean peninsula through the third and fourth decades of the Meiji period. And as it turned out, one side-effect of the establishment of a Japanese colonial government in Korea in 1910 was the reinforcement of theories about

'burakumin' having Korean ancestry. This process is reflected in Endō Ryūkichi's changing opinion on 'buraku' origins.

Endō Ryūkichi (1874-1946) was a prominent sociologist and pedagogue. A graduate of philosophy from Tokyo University, his interest in 'buraku' matters was possibly stimulated by his friendship with the Kyoto University sociologist Yoneda Shōtarō, who was widely known to be of 'buraku' origin'. In 1912, the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* newspaper published a four-part series on 'new commoners' in which Endō discussed some of the theories about their origins. Concerning claims that 'eta' status people were of foreign ancestry, Endō said, 'I am not a specialist in anthropology, so I cannot make detailed observations, but I find it extremely difficult to imagine that eta are a foreign race' (ijinshū 異人種). This was especially the case with regard to the Korean origin theory, he said, given that Korean immigrants had formerly been treated on a par with if not better than ordinary Japanese. Referring to theories claiming that they descended from 'Ezo' prisoners of war, he stated 'I cannot imagine this either', and added that the 'eta' status group had essentially been 'a kind of occupational class' (shokugyō kaikyū 職業階級).

But Endō changed his tune just a few years later. Lecturing to a gathering convened by a 'buraku' reform organization in Tokyo, he noted past suggestions by anthropologists that 'eta' manifested some 'racial' particularities. In effect, he

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134 Yoneda Shōtarō (1873-1944) was one of the founders of Japanese sociology. After studying sociology at Columbia University and the Collège de France, he returned to Japan in 1901 to teach at first at Dōshisha, and later at Kyoto University.


announced, the ‘eta’ status group probably did incorporate Korean elements, and especially people originally from the Korean butcher class known as ‘paekjong’ (白丁).

While I cannot say exactly what brought Endō to adopt this opinion, in all likelihood his awareness of the existence of a Korean social group akin to Japan’s ‘buraku’ residents was a factor of increased academic inquiry into Korea, which was a corollary of the establishment of Japanese control over the peninsula.

Others joined in the chorus. The following year in September 1916, a journalist by the name of Suzuki Kantarō published two articles about ‘buraku’ matters in the Osaka Mainichi Shinbun. In the first, he noted, ‘According to a report on anthropological studies of burakumin and Koreans by the Korean Museum’s Yagi Sōsaburo [...] the characteristics of Koreans are [...] that their eyes are comparatively far apart, and their faces are flat and not round. It is said that burakumin are like this too’. In view of this report, Suzuki proposed that the term ‘eta’ was not a derivation of ‘etori’, but—echoing the prior claims of people such as Kaneko Chō and Murase Kōtei—in fact came from the term ‘etta’ (越った) or ‘traverser’.

Joining selective readings of old records about immigration from the Korean peninsula with casual observations about physiognomy and linguistic and cultural coincidence, these late-Meiji- and early-Taishō-period theories were obviously not distinguished by their truth content. Rather, their rise was closely

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linked to Japanese imperialism and the spread of prejudiced sentiment towards Korea and Koreans. But it must be noted that even as the claim that ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ had foreign origins strengthened its hold on the popular imagination, theories relying on notions of permanent barriers between ‘Japanese’ and ‘foreigners’ also faced a variety of obstacles, in the form notably of academic studies indicating that members of an array of human populations had come together to constitute contemporary Japanese people.

**Varied Japanese origins**

Meiji-period historical, anthropological and ethnological studies indicated that the inhabitants of the Japanese islands were descended from indigenous groups, and also immigrants from the Korean peninsula, China, and more southern regions. The German medical doctor Erwin Baelz was one early authority on such matters. Recruited by the Japanese government as part of its mission to promote the spread of scientific learning in Japan, he resided in Tokyo for twenty-six years, from 1876 to 1902. Based on his medical experience, he hypothesized that three basic types, ‘the north or true Mongolian type […], the south Mongolian or Malayan type [and the] Ainu type’ constituted the contemporary Japanese. Baelz reckoned the Ainu were a dying race, however, rather than one that formed an integral part of the main population. But with


140 That the Ainu and Taiwan aborigines were dying out was as popular a notion in Japan (see the above quotation of Ohara Shinzō, for example), as was the belief that Aboriginal peoples were doing likewise in Australia.
regard to the Malay and Mongol elements, he declared that they were so intermixed that it would be impossible to differentiate clearly between them.\(^{141}\)

During the 1870s and 1880s, other foreign scholars such as Wilhelm Donitz (1838-1912) and Edward Morse (1838-1925) also argued that the Japanese had mixed ‘racial’ origins. The former, a Berlin-trained doctor specialized in anatomy who also taught in Tokyo, believed like Baelz that Mongol and Malay types together formed the contemporary Japanese.\(^{142}\) As noted above, Morse preferred a theory of ‘race’ replacement. Following on their work, which itself was presumably informed by the European studies of Japan that had proliferated from the 1850s onwards,\(^{143}\) domestic scholars began to study Japan’s ‘racial’ and ‘cultural’ history, ‘as a reaction to the gaze of Westerners who objectified Japan’.\(^{144}\)

The work of domestic scholars tended to confirm the impossibility of dividing the Japanese population up into distinct groups according to their ‘racial’ origins. Japanese anthropologists also used empirical techniques, taking body measurements of human groups in attempts to find patterns that would enable them to identify group particularities. Some targeted groups such as the Ainu or the Ryūkyūans (Okinawans) and measured their cranial size and so forth in the aim of determining their physical characteristics. But instead of detecting measurable differences between populations, their methods indicated that the


\(^{142}\) Hantara Kazurō, ‘Nihonjin no kigen’, p. 15. Donitz became better-known as one of the pioneers of Japanese arachnology.


range of divergence within a group was such that each group overlapped with others. The unambiguous empirical determination of group characteristics proved to be impossible.\footnote{Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, ‘Sokutei to iu gihō—jinshu kara kokumin he’ [測定という技法—人種から国民へ], in Edo No Shisō Henshū Jinkai, Edo no shisō, vol. 4, pp. 121-123.}

One practical effect of these findings was that a ‘mixed race theory holding that the Japanese were an assembly of many different races [...] became dominant’.\footnote{Mizuno Yū 水野祐, Nihon minzoku no genryū 『日本民族の源流』 (東京: 雄山閣, 1973), pp. 27-28. The claim that Japanese, Koreans and Chinese were all of common stock or ancestry was at odds with the commonsense notion that Japanese and Koreans or Chinese were not the same thing in actuality. To explain that difference, a distinction between the Japanese nation/race and that greater ‘stock community’ was instituted. See Weiner, ‘The invention of identity’, p. 110. That is, an ahistorical and eternal blood-related minzoku (民族, perhaps best rendered as the German volk) who formed the Japanese nation (kokumin 国民) proper were posited alongside that heterogeneous body of Japanese imperial subjects (teikoku shinmin 帝國臣民), enabling the ‘mono-racial Japanese nation’ (tanitsu minzoku 単一民族) to exist alongside the ‘multi-racial’ Japanese imperial subjects. Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, ‘Shohyō: Oguma Eiji “Taniitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen” ’「書評：小熊英二『単一民族神話の起源』」, Nihonshi Kenkyū 『日本史研究』, vol. 413, January 1997, pp. 77-80.}

This became the position of the influential anthropologist and archaeologist Torii Ryūzō (1870-1953), who conceived of the Japanese proper as ‘forever assimilating surrounding ethnic groups without losing their own identity’.\footnote{Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ‘Becoming Japanese: imperial expansion and identity crises in the early 20th century’, in Sharon A. Minichielio (ed.), Japan’s competing modernities. Issues in culture and democracy 1900-1930 (Manoa: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 172-173.} According to this increasingly popular idea, there was only one Japanese ‘race’, even though it incorporated people of other ‘races’. Diverse elements had come together to make a harmoniously unified whole.

Torii’s stance was presumably informed by his early work on ‘buraku’ residents, upon whom he had brought anthropological paradigms to bear in the late-nineteenth century. On his way to study the residents of Japan’s newly acquired colonial territory of Taiwan, Torii had stopped off in his native Tokushima to examine some local ‘eta’, as he called them. In a letter he sent to Tsuboi Shōgorō, which Tsuboi promptly published in the Tokyo Anthropological
Society’s journal, he wrote, ‘Looking at the *eta* of my hometown, it is hard to discern Mongol types amongst them. Rather, one can distinguish Malay types.’ Based on the premise that the Japanese comprised of Mongol and Malay types, he concluded that ‘the *eta* resemble a certain type that can be found among ordinary people [*futsūjin 普通人*], and are by no means a special form’ (*tokubetsu naru keishiki 特別なる形式*).\(^{148}\)

A Tokushima prefecture newspaper also reported on this survey, in which Torii carefully examined the bodily specifications of ten new commoner representatives. ‘Unexpectedly, they were delighted to take part [...] this was most convenient’. The journalist expanded upon Torii’s suggestion that the *eta* were closer to the Malay type than the Mongol type. ‘The Japanese race [*Nihon jinshu 日本人種*] arose from the mixing of various races [*jinshu aigō 人種相合*]. In the past, Baelz found two types among the Japanese. One was the so-called Mongoloid type, and one was the Malayan type [...]. The *eta* [...] are similar to those of the Malay type.’\(^{149}\)

Given his suggestion that the study of such people elsewhere in Japan might reveal ‘truly unexpected scholarly discoveries’,\(^ {150}\) it is conceivable that Torii conducted his study of people formerly of ‘*eta*’ status in the hope that since they formed a distinct group within Japanese society, they might manifest measurable physical traits. The following year, Torii went on to conduct another

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148 Torii Ryūzō 島居龍蔵, ‘*Eta ni tsuite* jinruigakuteki chōsa’ 「種多についての人類学的調査」, *Tōkyō Jinruigakkai Zasshi* 『東京人類学会雑誌』, vol. 140, November 1897, in SHYH, pp. 88-90. In the Taishō period, the notion that Malay ‘natives’ (*dōjin 土人*) were an primitive and defective type is said to have gained widespread currency amongst the masses. Yano Tōru 矢野操, *Nihon no nanyō shikan* 『日本の南洋史観』 (東京: 中央公論社, 1979), pp. 152-154. But it is not clear that Torii’s formulation has such connotations.


150 Torii, ‘*Eta ni tsuite*’, p. 89.
such survey, this time in Hyogo prefecture, which again involved detailed physical examinations and photographs. But 'unexpected discoveries' failed to eventuate; the results turned out to be largely the same as those he obtained in Tokushima. Remarkable empirical differences proved elusive, and as a whole, Torii’s work suggested that 'new commoners' were clearly situated within the 'racial' boundaries of the 'Japanese'.

'Buraku' activists used work indicating that the Japanese were of 'mixed race' to dispute claims that prejudices against 'buraku' residents were in some way 'racially'-based. Yanase Keisuke observed that in Japan, since almost everybody was of immigrant descent, almost none were 'purely indigenous' (junsui dosei 純粹土生), and that claims about 'new commoners' having foreign ancestry were therefore meaningless.

In 1902, Sasano Otokichi wrote in more detail of those theories about Japanese 'racial' origins. In order to criticize theories claiming that 'new commoners' had foreign ancestry, Sasano, who was a pawnbroker in his native Kyūshū ('buraku') district, discussed how the dominant trend in anthropology was to consider the contemporary 'Japanese breed' (Nihon shuzoku 日本種族) to be the offspring of miscegenation. That discipline, he noted, held that four 'breeds' (shuzoku 種族) lived in the Japanese empire: Japanese, Ainu, Ryukyuans, and Taiwanese. But the Japanese were themselves an amalgam.

'Upon close examination, three more distinctions appear amongst them', Sasano stated. Namely, the Japanese manifested Korean traits, Malay traits, and Ainu

151 ‘Eta no jinruigakuteki chōsa’ 『歴多の人類学的調査』, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, February 1898, in KBSS: 4, p. 11.
traits. ‘Each of these various components harmoniously melded together (yūwa konka 融和混化), and today [together...] form a single, complete nation’ (junzen taru ichi kokumin 純然たる一国民).\(^\text{153}\)

Expressing the sorts of ideas propounded by Torii Ryūzō and others, he thus argued that attempts to explain and justify discrimination against ‘new commoners’ with reference to foreign ancestry were nonsense.

**The foreign and the backward**

The commonsense view that the actual Japanese population was heterogeneous posed something of a problem for the argument that a number of geographically distinct populations had melded together to constitute the modern Japanese. Most notably, there were questions about the precise place of residents of the newly acquired territories of Ryūkyū/Okinawa and Hokkaido in the schema of contemporary ‘Japaneseness’.\(^\text{154}\)

Several factors conditioned interpretations of the ‘differences’ that scholars perceived in those populations. Although biological notions of ‘race’ or ‘foreignness’ were not absent from intellectual approaches to these issues, they were weakened by strong misgivings about such notions. Reflecting as they did the Western-derived racial hierarchy of ‘white’ followed by ‘yellow’ and then ‘black’, the theories of ‘race’ that scholars had introduced to the Japanese public during the second half of the nineteenth century situated the Japanese in a subordinate position with regard to ‘whites’. As mentioned in the previous chapter, to avoid seeing themselves as permanently inferior, rather than

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\(^\text{153}\) Sasano Otokichi 篠野音吉, ‘Shakai no yokuatsu’ 「社会の抑圧」, May 1902, in KB55: 4, pp. 440-441.

conceiving of races as being genetically or biologically determined, Japanese intellectuals developed a tendency to stress the importance of environmental conditions on human development. They also came up with the suggestion that differences between parts of the Japanese population were more acquired than innate; a matter of 'progress' more than a question of biology.

In the colonies, as Kawamura Minato observes, Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists 'tended to consider cultural differences as comparative issues of delayed or advanced progress'.\(^{155}\) That conceptual framework was developed domestically to deal with the apparently discrete internal populations such as the Ainu and the Ryūkyūans. Based on newly introduced ideas of historical progress, officials and scholars re-positioned such entities as temporally 'behind' rather than as spatially 'foreign', thus allowing for their characterization as 'backward' and 'marginal' Japanese groups that had been 'marooned in some earlier phase of national history'.\(^{156}\) Such a view explained the perceived particularities of those marginal groups, and reinforced Japanese claims over the newly acquired territories of Okinawa and Hokkaido. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, such notions were also to see the state, as well as those people who were deemed to be 'backward', engage in reform and improvement programs toward the common aim of 'national progress'.

To return to the topic in hand, based on the idea that 'foreignness' was nothing more than an expression of differing degrees of 'progress', some scholars and officials constructed an increasingly influential interpretation of the

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'buraku' problem. Their explanatory strategy set aside assertions of foreign origins and explained the reality of social marginalisation with reference to notions of progress and enlightenment. According to the people who wrote about the 'buraku' problem from this perspective, the fundamental problem of 'burakumin' was that they were 'backward'.

The author Shimazaki Tōson explicitly articulated this view in a 1906 essay on what he termed the 'New commoners of the mountain country'. Shimazaki explained that there were two 'new commoner' types. His statement was based on information he had gained from a local 'new commoner' boss. This informant had related to him, wrote Shimazaki, that 'those living along the Tōkaidō are mostly savage in nature. Those who live in the mountain country are [...] mainly descended from people of the area and fallen warriors.' Instead of focusing upon the possibility that they might be of different 'racial' types, however, Shimazaki went on to characterize these two 'new commoner' types as 'high class or enlightened' and 'low class or unenlightened' (using the English terms 'high class' and 'low class'). People of the former type were 'almost the same as us in appearance, habits, speech, and so on', while members of the latter group were 'just like savages' (yabanjin 野蛮人). Shimazaki's work, which 'buraku' activists consider to be deeply problematic because of its 'racialized' descriptions of 'burakumin', reflects how the 'racial' aspect of the 'buraku problem' was being reframed during the late-Meiji period in terms of progress and enlightenment.

A group of bureaucrats, politicians and academics, mostly educated during the Meiji years, had in fact begun to look at the 'buraku' problem from this perspective around the turn of the century. Their views on the matter presumably reflected the fact that the rising elites of late-Meiji Japan had been thoroughly inculcated in the virtues of progress and meritocracy, as well as the fact that they approached the issue from a practical standpoint, as a problem requiring treatment and resolution. They may also have been influenced by scholarly critiques of claims that 'burakumin' were of 'foreign descent'.

This new generation's approach to the 'buraku problem' was made explicit in 1901, in Yanase Keisuke's posthumously published work on 'buraku'-related matters entitled, 'Extra-societal society eta hinin'. Yanase argued that 'eta' status people were of varied ancestry, and claimed that their descendants, namely 'burakumin', were immoral, ignorant, and ill-mannered. But he attributed the responsibility for their 'deficiencies' to popular denigration of them, and prescribed education and reform as remedies.\(^{158}\)

When they came together to publish Yanase's work in 1901, a number of prominent public figures provided prefaces. The Mainichi newspaper editor and politician Shimada Saburō (1852-1923) wrote that the popular perception and treatment of 'burakumin' as a 'different type of inferior race' (ishu retszoku 悪種劣族) had in effect caused them to become a 'different type of inferior race'. Equals would become lesser beings after centuries of denigration, he declared.\(^{159}\)

The influential nobleman and member of the House of Peers, Konoe Atsumaro

\(^{158}\) Yanase, 'Shakaigai no shakai', p. 150. In his introduction to this work, Gondo mentioned that the original title of Yanase's work was the less sensational 'The past and future of new commoners' (新平民の過去及将来). Gondo Shinji 榎藤震二, 'Bōyū ikō kankō no shimatsu' 「亡友遺稿刊行の始末」, January 1901, in MBZ: 21, p. 115.

\(^{159}\) Shimada Saburō 島田三郎, 'Jo' 「序」, in MBZ: 21, p. 112. The prominent editor of the Mainichi newspaper, Shimada became well known for his campaigns for popular rights.
(1863-1904), stated that ‘burakumin’ were separate from society, ‘only because of the fact that for several hundred years, they have not engaged in social intercourse with ordinary Japanese’. Lack of contact had retarded their moral and intellectual development, but their backwardness was not immutable; it could and ought to be rectified. Kuwada Kumazō (1886-1932), a leading figure in charitable works and labour policy, wrote a third preface. He announced that ‘burakumin’ were ‘one element of our nation’ (wagakumin no ichibunshi 我国民の一分子), and determined, like Konoe, that they needed to be reformed and improved.

Of course, positing ‘burakumin’ as targets of reform and improvement campaigns that would enable them to ‘catch up’ to the level of progress and development attained by the rest of the population by no means negated claims that ‘burakumin’ were foreign. Claims of foreign ancestry retained and possibly increased their hold on the popular imagination, as more and more commentators announced that ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ were descended from a range of historically marginal populations, including various combinations of marooned sailors, defeated warriors, criminals, enslaved prisoners of wars, immigrants, aboriginal peoples, nomads, and pirates. Theories of Korean origins continued to be particularly influential during and also after the period of

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Japanese colonial rule over Korea.\textsuperscript{163} And the negative implications of suggestions about foreign ancestry were, of course, only heightened by the late-Meiji rise of the notion that Japan was a ‘family-state’.\textsuperscript{164}

In combination with apparently unchanging social prejudices, the ascription of foreign ancestry and moral and scientific defectivity to ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ tended to impart an insoluble aspect to the problem. The intractable appearance of the issue no doubt reinforced suggestions that emigration—to Hokkaidō or to the colonies—was the only realistic solution to the issue. Commentators suggested that even though they were subjects who were defective in relation to proper Japanese, they might nonetheless make something of themselves in the colonies by virtue of their presumed superiority to the colonized.

\textsuperscript{163} Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, \textit{Ika to dōka no hazama—hisabetsu buraku ninshiki no kiseki} 『異化と同化の間—被差別部落認識の軌跡』 (東京: 青木書店, 1999), pp. 113-114. Such theories were deployed to argue against colonial assimilation policies. A prominent journalist and author by the name of Aoyagi Tsunatarō interpreted the plight of ‘new commoners’ in Japan to mean that any Japanese government policies that aimed to bring about the assimilation of Koreans to Japanese ways would be futile, since ‘eta’ (‘new commoners’), who in his view were Korean immigrants, had remained separate for so many centuries. Aoyagi Tsunatarō 青柳範太郎, ‘Sōtoku tôchishi ron’ 「総督統治史論」, 1928, cited in Imanishi Hajime 今西一, ‘Teikoku “Nihon” no jigazō—1920 nendai no Chōsen “dōka” ron’ 「帝国『日本』の自画像—1920年代の朝鮮『同化』論」, \textit{Ritsumeikan Gengo Bunka Kenkyū} 『立命館言語文化研究』, vol. 8 no. 3, January 1997, pp. 16-17. Aoyagi’s statements came in the context of debates in Japanese intellectual circles over the kinds of government policies that Japan should take towards Korea, and specifically whether Koreans should enjoy the same rights and education and be imposed the same duties as Japanese people.

\textsuperscript{164} Suzuki Masayuki 鈴木正幸, \textit{Kindai tenmōsei no shihai chitsuyo} 『近代天皇制の支配秩序』 (東京：校倉書房, 1986), pp. 86-87.
Chapter four

Migration and national belonging

Early colonial plans

Meiji-period scholars and officials often saw emigration as a promising means of settling the perceived problems posed by 'new commoners'. Edo-period intellectuals had proposed mobilizing 'outcasts' for colonial purposes; the idea of relocating the socially marginal to distant parts was not entirely new. By tracing the history of such schemes, this chapter will make clear a transformation in elite perceptions of those groups, from passive objects that rulers could freely mobilize for colonial purposes during the Edo period, towards national subjects in the Meiji years who from a government perspective could hopefully be mobilized into emigrating voluntarily through appeals to their patriotism.

Propelled by social, political and economic changes associated with a higher degree of integration into the world-economy, large-scale human migrations from and
around Japan increased rapidly during the so-called modern era (1868-1945). The fact that law had circumscribed travel in the Edo period underscores the novelty of this phenomenon. Concerned about Christianity’s subversive potential, encouraged by Dutch traders seeking to shut out competition, and desiring to prevent southwestern domains from enriching themselves through trade, the Tokugawa Bakufu had closely regulated foreign contacts. In 1617, it banned Spanish shipping, forbade Japanese subjects from travelling abroad as well as returning from abroad in 1635, and banned Portuguese shipping and restricted Dutch and Chinese shipping and trade to the port of Nagasaki in 1639. The Edo-period rulers also acted to limit human mobility within Japan, particularly of peasants, in the aim of ensuring the continuity of economic production and the maintenance of social order.

Somewhat exceptionally, a few members of the Edo-period intelligentsia advocated the mobilization of ‘outcast’ status people for colonial ends. Most notably, they argued for the ‘settlement’ of the northern island of Ezochi, today called

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Hokkaido. Stirred by economic considerations and by perceived Western colonial threats, they called for the state to take over the entire island, thereby to complete the slow and piecemeal process of invasion commenced centuries earlier.⁴

During the early part of the Tenpō period (1716-1736), Namikawa Tenmin (並河天民, 1716-1718) made one of the earliest such proposals.⁵ A student of the celebrated Confucianist, Itō Jinsai, and the son of a Yamashiro province (Shiga) rice trader, Tenmin perhaps gleaned his knowledge of Ezochi from merchants. For not only did traders from Matsumae domain—the Bakufu’s toehold on Hokkaido—pass through the area on their way to Osaka, which was then the trading capital of Japan, Yamashiro merchants were also emerging as a major force in the trade of goods originating from Ezochi around that time.⁶ Although Tenmin’s proposal had no immediate practical impact, it possibly stimulated a later and more influential work by a Nagasaki doctor and administrator named Kudō Heisuke (1734-1800), as Kudō appears to have been the adopted son of Tenmin’s elder brother Kudō Takean.⁷

In 1783, noting Russian trading interest in Ezochi, which had been apparent to Matsumae domain officials since at least the late 1760s,⁸ and learning of the prevalence of clandestine trade with Russians from the Matsumae Magistrate of Finances, Kudō wrote an essay in which he argued that the Bakufu would derive great

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⁴ Miyajima Toshimitsu 宮島利光, Ainu minzoku to Nihon no rekishi 『アイヌ民族と日本の歴史』 (東京：三一書房, 1996), pp. 61-63. The Kamakura Bakufu exiled criminals to Ezochi from the end of the twelfth century; small numbers of warriors, fishers and traders ventured north from the thirteenth century onwards; some degree of group migration commenced around the mid-fifteenth century.


⁷ Kaiho Mineo 海保敏夫, Kinsei no Hokkaido 『近代の北海道』(東京：教育社, 1979), pp. 126-129.


In concrete terms, he suggested that legalizing trade with the Russians and developing the island’s undoubted mineral resources would replenish the state coffers.\footnote{Kudō Heisuke 工藤平助, ‘Aka ezo ōsetsu kō’ [赤蝦夷風説考], in Ōtomo Kisaku (ed.) 大友喜作 著, *Hokumon sósho*, vol. 1 『北門叢書 第1冊』 (東京：國書刊行会, 1972), pp. 209-245.}

Through the good offices of acquaintances, he managed to have this work brought to the notice of Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-1788), who was then chief retainer of the Shōgun, Tokugawa Ieharu (1737-1786). State finances were in parlous condition, and Tanuma, who favoured a relatively flexible interpretation of the policy of seclusion, saw Kudō’s plan as a promising way of increasing revenue and improving the economic situation.\footnote{Tsui Zennosuke 齋藤善之助, *Tanuma jidai* 『田沼時代』 (東京：日本學術普及会, 1936), p. 186.} Attracted by the suggestion that colonizing Ezochi would be economically advantageous, he ordered a team of officials to survey the area. Contrary to the claims of Matsumae officials, that team subsequently declared Hokkaido to be well-suited to the production of rice and grains, and their positive reports led Tanuma to decide in favour of colonization.\footnote{Sekine Tokuo 関根德男, *Tanuma no kaikaku—Edo jidai saidai no keizai kaikaku* 『田沼の改革—江戸時代最大の経済改革』 (東京：朝倉書店, 1999), pp. 96-97.}

Bakufu officials went on to formulate a plan to send some 70,000 ‘" eta’ status people under the command of Danzaemon, the Edo ‘outcast’ lord, to colonize Ezochi. Their plan was submitted to the Bakufu’s Council of Elders in 1786, but subsequent to the illness and death of Tokugawa Ieharu that year, Tanuma was forced to retire, and the plan ended unrealised.\footnote{Takakura Shinichirō 高倉新一郎, *Hokkaidō takushoku shi* 『北海道拓殖史』 (札幌：柏葉書院, 1947), pp. 33-36. It is to be noted that upon succeeding Tanuma, Matsudaira Sadanobu acted to rid the city of Edo of a surfeit of poor people by relocating some of them to the Izu islands in 1789. Minami}

\footnote{It remains noteworthy, however, given that it was the...}
first officially sanctioned program for the colonization of Ezochi, and that it relied on using ‘eta’ status people as a developmental corps.

Members of the ruling class presumably thought of using ‘eta’ status people in such a manner because they perceived them to be suited to mass relocation and use in colonial expansion. A considerable number were tightly controlled under a powerful ruler, the Danzaemon, while many also undertook some policing and paramilitary duties. They were also a relatively small part of the overall population—perhaps two percent—and given their low social status, open to being seen as more or less expendable.

However, although concerns about Russian incursions and Ainu unrest caused the Bakufu to take direct control over Ezochi from 1807 to 1821, and again from 1855, colonization or emigration programs did not become a part of official policy during that time. Rather, with the intention of constructing a bulwark against any foreign invasions of the main islands, Bakufu officials attempted briefly to Japanize the Ainu through an assimilation program, which they abandoned in response to lengthy protests in 1818,14 and more durably to win Ainu allegiance by means of the provision of various commodities.15

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15 See Kikuchi Isao 菊池勇夫, ‘Kinsei kōki no bakuhan kenyoku to Ainu—“kaihō” no ronri to “hikamotsu” ’ 『近世後期の幕藩権力とアイヌ 『介抱』の論理と『被下物』』, in Katō Eiichi et
Scholars nonetheless continued to formulate plans for colonizing the area, suggesting the use of ‘outcast’ status people ever more frequently. In the 1840s, an influential Confucian scholar and scientist named Hoashi Banri (1778-1852) made a well-known call for the state to mobilize ‘eta’ status people for colonial purposes. Writing in the context of an increasingly worrying Western presence in the region, Banri recommended transferring minor daimiates to Karafuto (Sakhalin) and the Kurile islands to help protect the country from Russian incursion. Further, he proposed relocating people of ‘eta’ status to Ezochi, in order both to improve Japanese domestic order and to strengthen Japan’s international position. As discussed in the previous chapter, Banri thought of ‘eta’ status people as the ‘descendants of a type of barbarian’ who had formerly inhabited Japan’s northern reaches. That is, he almost certainly believed members of this ‘outcast’ group to be of ‘Ezo’ descent, and thus in a way, he was calling for them to be repatriated. He also claimed that such people had criminal tendencies, and saw this to be a major problem, given that they were often entrusted with policing duties. To remedy that situation, and simultaneously to develop and protect Japan’s northern frontier, he recommended that the government assemble and ritually cleanse them, grant them commoner status, and transport them to Ezochi.16

The first detailed program concerning ‘outcast’ mobilization for colonial purposes since the late-eighteenth century, Hoashi Banri’s ideas gained considerable exposure. One of his former students, Yokoi Hôzan (Tokuzaburô, 1814-1855),

quickly adopted Hoashi’s proposals, and it is conceivable that Yokoi intended to put them into practice. Son of a Confucianist medical practitioner, Yokoi demonstrated a keen interest in the areas to the north of Japan, and had personally voyaged to the island of Karafuto (Sakhalin), as well as to Matsumae domain. In a text of 1855, Yokoi echoed Hoashi Banri’s main points, proposing to ritually cleanse the ‘eta’, and thereafter to send them to Ezo to protect Japan’s northern reaches. The Bakufu employed Yokoi to implement measures for developing Ezo that very year, and it is reasonable to suggest that he would have envisaged the mobilization of ‘outcasts’ for that purpose. But Yokoi died abruptly, without managing to achieve any concrete results.

The Nativist scholar Yano Harumichi (1823-1887) was also drawn to the notion of using ‘outcast’ status people for colonial purposes. He proposed in an 1867 text that people of ‘eta’ status be relocated to Ezo, as well as to the islands of Sado, Yakushima, Izu Ōshima, and the Ogasawaras (Bonin islands), in order to protect Japan from foreign incursion. Yano’s plan was transmitted to the leading court noble, Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883), and Iwakura himself subsequently touched upon the issue of ‘eta’ relocation in a report he wrote in 1868 for the new

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Meiji government. He likewise recommended gathering criminals and other people such as those of ‘eta’ status who found it ‘hard to mingle with ordinary people’, and to send them off to Ezochi to engage in development projects.  

Soon afterwards in 1869, delegates presented similar arguments at the Kōgisho (公議所, literally the ‘place of public debate’), a new deliberative body made up of domainal representatives. Comprising mainly of relatively progressive-minded former military class men, some delegates displayed considerable interest in ‘outcasts’ as a policy issue. From the perspective of state needs such as increasing tax revenues (as some people of ‘outcast’ status enjoyed special dispensation from certain taxes) and uniting the people, almost all who spoke upon the subject agreed that the emancipation of ‘outcast’ status people was necessary.  

Hoashi Banri’s son Ryūkichi was among the delegates, and he reiterated the argument his father had made some two decades earlier. In 1871, the noble and later politician Ōe Taku (Tenya, 1847-1921) also presented a submission to the Civil Affairs Ministry in which he propose ‘outcast’ relocation to Hokkaido as a solution to their social excommunication.

These plans to mobilize ‘outcasts’ for colonial purposes were generally concerned with furthering state interests. Members of the ruling classes and those aligned with them called for the colonization of Ezochi based on considerations of state prestige, defence, domestic social order, and economic development. The idea of

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22 The relevant 1869 debates are reproduced in Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.) 吉野作造編, Meiji bunka zenshū, vol. 4, Kensei hen 『明治文化全集 第4巻 憲政篇』 (東京：日本評論社, 1929), pp. 29-31, 142-155 (hereafter MBZ: 4).

23 Hoashi Ryūkichi 岸志龍吉, ‘Eta wo heinin to shi, Ezochi ni utusu beki no gi’ 「蝦夷を平人とし、蝦夷地に移すべきの議」, in MBZ: 4, p. 144.

mobilizing ‘outcast’ status people for such ends probably sprang from a perception of them as a group whose attributes meant they could readily be turned to colonial ends. The implication was that ‘outcasts’ would be more useful to the state outside the country than within it. Needless to say, the interests of ‘outcasts’ and other prospective migrants-cum-colonizers were not important concerns for such planners.

In light of the fate of emigrants associated with the first official attempt to bring about mass emigration to Hokkaido, ‘outcasts’ were probably quite fortunate that rulers never succeeded in implementing the above-mentioned plans. In 1869, the Tokyo authorities despatched thousands of poor and homeless people from Tokyo to the Shimōsa plain in contemporary Chiba prefecture, in the interests of ‘maintaining order and rebuilding the economy’.25 That project had been intended to be one-half of a two-part relocation operation. The authorities had also taken steps to bring about the emigration of other poor Tokyoites to Hokkaido and Karafuto. But the too-obviously unprepared state of emigrants brought government officials to reconsider, and to withdraw their support from that part of the scheme. The plan for northwards emigration went ahead independently, however. In September 1869, over 500 beggars and ‘hinin’ status people set off for Hokkaido, together with over 100 labourers, while another 300 migrants departed for Karafuto.26 Although a few emigrants


26 Takazaki Shūji 高崎宗司, 'Maegaki 「前書き」, in Ōe Shinobu et al. (eds.) 大江志乃夫ほか編, Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi, vol. 5, Bōchō suru teikoku no jinryū 『岩波講座近代日本と植民地 第5巻 形成する帝国の人流』 (東京：岩波書店, 1993), p. vii.
managed to return to Tokyo the following year, it seems that the majority met miserable ends.27

The Meiji government abolished the ‘outcast’ status groups in 1871, and established the legal equality of Japanese subjects in 1872. Such measures caused the forcible emigration that early colonial planners had envisaged to become impracticable. Schemes specifically targeting ‘outcasts’ for colonial migration became sidelined by efforts to attract voluntary migrants to Ezochi, which had been re-named Hokkaido in 1869.

Settling the northern frontier

The colonization of Hokkaido was a major objective of the Meiji government. Taking the position that developing Hokkaido would require mass migration from the main islands, the government established a Development Bureau (Kaitakushi 開拓使) in 1869. In 1882, three short-lived prefectures (Sapporo, Hakodate and Nemuro) would replace that body, and in 1886, a single unified Hokkaido prefecture would in turn supersede them. Charged with the colonial development of Hokkaido, these administrative authorities all used similar means of attracting voluntary migrants: assisted travel, living allowances upon arrival, and most importantly, the prospect of cheap or free land upon the successful development of one’s allocated plot.28

Non-official bodies also promoted emigration to Hokkaido. The authorities of East Honganji Temple, an influential Kyoto Buddhist institution of the Pure Land

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28 Yasuda Taijirō 安田泰次郎, Hokkaidō imin seisakushi 『北海道移民政策史』(東京: 東天平, 1979) covers this in detail.
True Faith sect, pushed emigration in the early 1870s.\textsuperscript{29} Having previously been closely aligned with the Bakufu, East Honganji officials desired to curry favour with the new government. Thus they mobilized the priests of affiliated temples to encourage peasants to migrate.\textsuperscript{30} During the 1880s and 1890s, numerous official and also commercial publications promoted emigration,\textsuperscript{31} while private migration agencies too, attempted to seduce people into emigrating with glowing accounts of life in the north.\textsuperscript{32} The commencement of the Russian trans-Siberian railroad project in the late 1880s aroused further state and media concern about the possibility of invasion from the northwest, and gave added impetus to such promotional activities.\textsuperscript{33}

Availing themselves of these offers of land and various forms of assistance, many former military class people, especially from domains that had sided with the Bakufu, as well as poorer people, emigrated (table one gives a rough idea of Hokkaido's immigration-fuelled population growth).\textsuperscript{34} Visions of new horizons awaiting discovery, the notion that the northern frontier was a place of freedom and possibility, and the prospect of easily acquiring land, all combined to lure settlers northwards.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{29} Kaiho Mineo 海保峯夫, Bakuhansei kokka to Hokkaidō 『幕藩制国家と北海道』 (東京：三一書房, 1978), p. 320.
\textsuperscript{33} Kaiho, \textit{Bakuhansei kokka}, pp. 324-326.
\textsuperscript{34} Tanaka and Kuwabara, \textit{Hokkaidō kaitaku}, pp. 78-79. See also Miyajima, \textit{Ainu minzoku}, pp. 149-150.
Calls for emigration to Hokkaido that specifically targeted ‘new commoners’ began to appear during the 1880s. Concerned by the persistence of popular prejudices against such people, which rendered them backward and unproductive, intellectuals imagined that emigration would ameliorate their situation. An early recommendation of this sort came in the spring of 1884. The Kochi-based Doyo Shinbun, which was closely associated with the local Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, published a lengthy essay by a man named Matsumoto Gorō, in which he dealt with the question of ‘new commoners’. Matsumoto argued that relocation was the best way of dealing with this group of impoverished and ostracized people, predicting that relocation to Hokkaido would reform their lowly ways and improve their desperate circumstances.36

Some ‘new commoners’ also expressed a degree of interest in emigrating. In the summer of 1884, the Jiyū Shinbun, linked to Itagaki Taisuke’s Liberal Party, reported on the situation of ‘new commoners’ in Okayama prefecture’s Mimasaka area. Some of the bloodiest anti-government uprisings of the early-Meiji years erupted in Mimasaka, and had involved murderous attacks on local ‘new commoner’ communities. ‘Even today, denigration of those people has not abated. They are still called eta, and are shunned. In dire straits [...] they have enquired about migrating en

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36 Matsumoto Gorō 松本五郎, ‘Shinheimin kyūsaisaku’ 新平民救済策, Doyo Shinbun 士陽新聞, 23 April 1884, in KBSS: 3, pp. 547-549.
masse to Hokkaido'. 37 Given a lack of improvement in their relations with others since the announcement of the abolition decree, these people clearly felt that emigration might be the best option in their attempts to better their lives.

All the same, emigration was a huge step to take, and reluctance to depart from hometowns and abandon friends and occupations seems to have been the most common response to suggestions about migrating to Hokkaido. On the first day of 1900, a report from Niigata prefecture in the Sado Shinbun informed readers that despite an offer that would have enabled them to emigrate under very favourable conditions, local ‘new commoners’ had displayed no interest in the idea. 38 In Kyoto, the local Hinode Shinbun likewise reported, ‘In the past, some proposed that they [‘new commoners’] relocate to Hokkaido under favourable conditions, but they stubbornly refused to comply.’ 39

Such reluctance appears to have weakened towards the end of the Meiji period, no doubt due both to the ‘longevity’ of prejudices and to the influence of utopian representations of Hokkaido. As Hokkaido-bound emigrant numbers soared in the late 1880s and early 1890s, writers were constructing an image of Hokkaido in the popular imagination as a frontier land of liberty and possibility. Similar to the way in which Edo-period writers like Andō Shōeki had portrayed Ainu society as a classless utopia and encouraged a number of peasants from the northeastern regions of Japan to

38 ‘Moto kōjiki no shitei kyōiku’ 『旧乞食の子弟教育』, Sado Shinbun 『佐渡新聞』, 1 January 1900, in KBSS: 4, p. 132.
migrate to Ezochi, Meiji-period writers represented Hokkaido as a location where ‘new commoners’ might find a home free from the prejudices and attendant lack of socio-economic opportunities that blighted their lives in the home islands.

The celebrated rakugo (落語) storyteller Sanyūtei Enchō provided an early example of this genre. In 1886, the Yamato Shinbun serialized one of his stories that told of a love affair between a young ‘hinin’ status man and the daughter of a successful merchant in the last years of the Edo period. Their relationship ends badly, and worse still, the woman is stigmatised by virtue of her former association with the young ‘hinin’ man. After great hardships and at the story’s end, she meets a man of good family who is unaffected by prejudices against people of low social status, and they marry. Because of her ‘outcast’ associations, however, the residents of the village where the couple reside ostracize them. Sanyūtei Enchō concluded his tale with the husband suggesting to her, ‘let’s go to a new country together where we are unknown, clear and level the land and make it productive, work for the common good, teach and enlighten the ignorant…’ With the advent of legal equality in the early-Meiji years, the couple then depart for Hokkaido. Said to have been written as Enchō was in fact en route for Hokkaido, his story is notable as an early literary case of Hokkaido being depicted as a promised land where marginalised people subjected to social prejudices would be free to develop to their full potential.

40 Kaiho, Kinsei no Hokkaidō, pp. 186-187.
The attainment of distant utopias became a common theme in fictional writings dealing with social prejudices. Among those referring to Hokkaido, ‘Migrant academy’, the short story by journalist and women’s rights advocate Shimizu Shikin (Toyoko, 1868-1933) briefly mentioned in chapter one, reprised the basic themes of Enchō’s story. Published in 1899, Shikin’s tale featured a woman who learns that she is partly of ‘eta descent’. After she informs her husband of this unwelcome revelation, he resigns from his post as a government minister, and the couple leaves for Hokkaido, which is suggested to be free from such outmoded prejudices. There, they are to establish the ‘Migrant academy’ of the title, and devote themselves to the common good by educating ‘new commoner’ children.42 Iwano Hōmei (1873-1920) too, depicted Hokkaido as a free and tolerant land of hope for ‘new commoners’ in his ‘Social tragedy: Fukumatsu the axe’ of 1917. Recounting the tribulations of Fukumatsu, a wealthy and rebellious ‘new commoner’, Iwano has his anti-hero beg his lover to join him in flight to Hokkaido, where they might begin anew, far from her prejudiced father.43

Given economic inducements and such utopian representations of the northern frontier land, Ogasawara Masaru has written that, ‘it is not hard to imagine that poor people from the home islands—ancestral tenant farmers and burakumin and so on—settled there’.44 Certainly, many poor peasants made their way to Hokkaido during

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the Meiji years, and records indicate that during the 1910s, some groups of ‘buraku’ residents also made their way northwards.

In addition to the factors outlined above, official and semi-official ‘buraku’ reform bodies played decisive roles in these group emigration programs. The precise actions of the central government in this regard are not clear. Ian Neary suggests that ‘The second Katsura Cabinet in 1908 established a policy to encourage Burakumin to emigrate [...] but no funds were allocated for this purpose.’ His comment refers back to an article by Narusawa Eiju in which Narusawa proposed that there had been an abortive government effort to bring about the dispersal or emigration of ‘burakumin’. In his overview of the Interior Ministry’s approach to ‘buraku’ issues during the late-Meiji and Taishō periods, Fujino Yutaka wrote that the ministry ‘enthusiastically promoted emigration of the buraku masses to Hokkaido’, while in the same reference work, Kurokawa Midori cautioned that the ministry’s promotional activities consisted mainly of talk. ‘There is little evidence of [such plans] having been carried out’, she says.

In actuality, central government action promoting the relocation of ‘buraku’ residents appears to have been limited to instructions issued to prefectural authorities around Japan. The Interior Ministry official Tomeoka Kōsuke remarked in 1912 that

46 This is not to exclude the possibility of migrants before this; it is merely that resources for earlier times are meagre.
50 Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, ‘Ijū / imin’ 「移住・移民」, in Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo, Buraku Mondai Jiten, p. 25.
the Ministry had drawn up and distributed to the authorities of each prefecture a work entitled ‘Guide to migrating to Hokkaido’. According to Tomeoka, this text identified particular ‘buraku’ communities in which prefectural officials were to promote the practice of emigration.

During the last years of the Meiji period, the Interior Ministry had instructed prefectural officials all around the country to draft reports on the population, per capita incomes, crime rates, customs and so on of ‘buraku’ communities in their jurisdictions. The data resulting from those surveys thus appears to have been used in identifying those parts of the population whose departure was to be encouraged. The timing of the publication that Tomeoka mentions suggests it was perhaps at the root of the perception that the Interior Ministry was beginning to formulate an emigration policy to deal with ‘new commoners’, as the Mie Shinbun reported in the summer of 1911.

In some instances, prefectural officials acted to facilitate emigration. A series of letters from a young (‘buraku’) emigrant in Hokkaido addressed to a Nara prefecture official reveal that group emigration, which took place in 1912, had benefited from the assistance of the prefectural authorities. According to these

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51 The title Tomeoka gave (‘Hokkaidō iū annai’「北海道移住案内」) was the title of the official prefectural guide to migration published by the Hokkaido authorities from 1891 to 1899, when it was replaced by a publication known as the ‘Hokkaidō iū tebikisō' 「北海道移住手引草」. See Hokkaidō Chō, Shinsen Hokkaidō shi, vol. 3, pp. 78-79. It is unclear if Tomeoka is referring to a particular edition of this latter guide, or if some special publication under the former title was printed in the late-Meiji years.

52 Tomeoka Kōsuke 留岡幸助, ‘Saimin buraku kaizen no gaiyō (continued)’「細民部落改善の概要 (続)」, Keisatsu Kyōkai Zasshi 『警察協会雑誌』, August 1912, in KBSS: 5, pp. 68-69.


54 'Tokushumin imin shōrei' 「特殊民移民奨励」, Mie Shinbun 『三重新聞』, 18 July 1911, in MKBS, p. 93.
epistles, Hokkaido was a great improvement on Nara, for apart from the fact that emigrants were allotted a considerable area of land over which they could acquire ownership through clearing the land and beginning agricultural activities, established residents warmly welcomed and aided them.55

More commonly, emigration schemes relied on the aid of semi-official bodies. ‘Buraku’ reform organizations such as the Nara-based Yamato Dōshikai (大和同志会, the Yamato Comrade’s Association), established in 1912, and the more central Teikoku Kōdōkai (帝国公道会, the Imperial Justice Association), established in 1914, organized a number of late-Meiji and early-Taisho group emigration programs. Nara prefecture politicians, bureaucrats and ‘buraku’ elites comprised the membership of the former, while the latter body, centred on Ōe Taku, included aristocrats, academics, social reformers and ‘buraku’ elites. Although she downplays the number of emigrants involved, Kurokawa Midori suggests that these bodies were instrumental in bringing about emigration to Hokkaido from ‘buraku’ communities in Nara, Shiga, Aichi, Kyoto, Kochi and Tokushima prefectures.56

Tanaka Toyofumi, a former schoolteacher and ‘buraku’ reformer from Shiga prefecture, indicated in a 1916 article published in the Yamato Dōshikai’s journal Meiji no Hikari57 that the Teikoku Kōdōkai had drawn up plans to re-settle 2,000

57This journal was published by Matsui Shōgorō 松井庄五郎 (1869-1931), a Nara prefecture ‘buraku’ activist, businessman and intellectual. The first edition (1912) had a print run of 500, the second of 700, and the third 1500. However, financial problems plagued the paper, and it folded in 1918. See ‘Matsui Shōgorō rireki’ 松井庄五郎履歴, 16 December 1920, in KBSS: 9, pp. 150-151. Reflecting Matsui’s interest in emigration, the journal regularly and prominently featured articles on the subject. See also
‘buraku’ households from the main Japanese islands in Hokkaido. The first group of around sixty people from Shiga prefecture had emigrated in 1913, he reported. A follow-up report some months later was subtitled, ‘The poor of yesterday are today’s landowners’, and presented a bright picture of life in Hokkaido. It included a message from emigrants to those yet to emigrate. ‘The women and children have forgotten about home and gossip excitedly about who will come next year [...]. Please tell migrants to come as soon as they can’.59

Groups from ‘buraku’ communities also departed for Hokkaido from Kyoto prefecture. Ueda Seiichi, a former teacher in the Kyoto ‘buraku’ community of Yanagihara, led a group of emigrants to Hokkaido in early 1917, and reported the following year that in the north, ‘the poor who are despised in the home islands [naichi 内地] are not treated at all differently’.60

A number of commentators echoed this suggestion that there was a relative absence of social prejudices against former ‘buraku’ residents in Hokkaido. The ethnologist Kita Teikichi stated, ‘those who have migrated to Hokkaido are very

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58 Tanaka Toyofumi 田中豊文, ‘Hokkaido ni dekita Ōnimura ni tsuki shokumin jōkyō ippan’ 北海道に来た近江村住民記念 日本, Meiji No Hikari 『明治之光』, April 1916, pp. 29-32.
59 ’Zappō’ 「雑報」, Meiji No Hikari 『明治之光』, October 1916.
60 Ueda Seiichi 上田 聡一, letter to the Kyoto city office, reprinted in the Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 20 October 1918, in KNBS 7, pp. 514-516. Kobayashi Takehiro reports that most of Ueda’s group in fact comprised of ordinary peasants from Gifu and Osaka, and that relations between all were warm. Kobayashi Takehiro 小林丈広, ‘Ue kara no kaizen undō’ 上からの改善運動, in KNBS 2, pp. 116-117.
seldom discriminated against', and the Bureau of Public Order concurred, finding in a countrywide survey of 'burakumin' in 1922 that there were none in Hokkaido.

More than problems of ostracism and denigration, and despite the optimistic tone of the reports mentioned above, migrants to Hokkaido seem often to have found it hard to survive. Crop failures forced all of the Kyoto emigrants associated with Ueda Seiichi's venture to resort to day labouring, and Ueda quickly sent them all home again. The fate of emigrants from other prefectures is obscure. But in all likelihood, they faced the same difficulties as other poor migrants to Hokkaido.

Reports on the general situation of poorer early-twentieth-century migrants to Hokkaido indicate that despite the advertisements about free and fertile land, low taxation, and a better life, the reality was rather bleak. New arrivals found that rich and more influential migrants had already appropriated all the best land. 'Their great expectations turn to ashes, and in despair, they are forced to become agricultural labourers on great estates'. Whatever the basis of the glowing reports about successful emigration to Hokkaido, the alien nature of the northern environment,

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61 Kita Teikichi 喜田貞吉, 'Tokushu buraku no jinkō zōshoku' '特殊部落の人口増殖', Minzoku To Rekishi 『民族と歴史』, July 1919, p. 145.
62 Keihokyoku 警保局, 'Sabetsu teppai undō jōkyō' '差別撲滅運動状況', May 1922, in Ogino Fujio (ed.) 萩野幸夫編, Tokkō keisatsu kankei shiryō shūsei, vol. 12, Suíhei undō / zatrichi Chōsenjin undō 『特高警察関係資料集成 第12卷 水平運動・在日朝鮮人運動』 (東京：不二出版, 1992), p. 10. The young Marxist intellectual Takahashi Sadaki 藤橋貞樹 contradicted this view. 'In Hokkaido, it is said that burakumin from diverse regions are forming buraku again', Takahashi Sadaki 高橋貞樹, Tokushu buraku shi 『特殊部落史』 (京都：更生閣, 1924), pp. 220-222. His comments are probably related to his view that emigration was akin to flight, reflecting insufficient solidarity with other oppressed peoples who remained behind.
63 See Kobayashi, 'Ue kata no kaizen undō', pp. 116-117.
together with high taxes, high prices, and limited economic opportunities, conceivably caused some migrants to have second thoughts about migration.

**Southern colonial visions**

The Nanyō (南洋) was in some ways the southern equivalent of Hokkaido. In the popular imagination of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, that word too, came to signify a ‘land’ of freedom and opportunity. Literally ‘the southern ocean’, Peattie has described the Nanyō as ‘a geographical concept as nebulous as the ambitions directed toward it, but which, in the first years of the Meiji era, was generally defined as the tropical Pacific, particularly Micronesia.\(^\text{66}\)

The Japanese ruling strata’s interest in that region boomed in the 1880s and 1890s. To a degree, elite interest in that region presumably grew out of Edo-period visions of bountiful and untaxed islands lying to the south, and was also related to concrete Edo-period plans for southwards expansion.\(^\text{67}\) But the primary factor fuelling this mid-Meiji interest was the Japanese ruling classes’ desire for more colonial territory, since it was now clear that Hokkaido’s colonization and development had been ‘successful’. Proponents of Japanese southwards expansion stressed the Nanyō’s significance from the perspectives of national economic development and defence,\(^\text{68}\) and suggested that the region could also become another depository for poorer

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\(^{67}\) On prior perceptions of the Ogasawaras (Bonins) and other southern islands, see Tanaka Hiroyuki, ‘How the Japanese of the Edo period perceived the Ogasawara islands’, translated by Stephen Wright Horn, *Journal of Maritime History*, no. 50, June 1993 at <http://nihongo.human.metro-u.ac.jp/bonins/04tanaka.htm>.

\(^{68}\) Irie Toraji 入江時次, *Meiji nanshin shikō 『明治南進史稿』* (東京：井田書店, 1943), p. 298.
Japanese from the home islands. In addition, by the late 1880s, a number of intellectuals had toured the area and published accounts of their voyages, thereby stimulating considerable public interest.

Plans to mobilize low status people were prominent among the arguments for southwards expansion that surfaced during the mid-1880s. Early in 1886, Yokō Tōsaku (1839-1903), a former Sendai domain official and subsequently a high-ranking police bureaucrat during the Meiji period, devised one of the earliest such plans. He proposed to rent land in the Philippines and there construct a new home for poor people, prostitutes, prisoners and ‘desperate new commoners despised by society’. Emigrants would farm, engage in mercantile activities, and ultimately contribute to Japanese economic development. Yokō foresaw additional bonuses in the fact that according to his calculations, this program would cost much less than maintaining the Japanese prison population of the time. Nothing came of it, but others quickly formulated similar schemes.

One of the best-known proposals involved two prominent figures associated with the nationalist Seikyōsha association: Sugiura Shigetake and Fukumoto Nichinan. Southwards colonial expansion to prevent Western powers from gaining influence in regions neighboring Japan was a common preoccupation of Seikyōsha members. Towards achieving the more ambitious aim of reducing Western influence

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69 See, for example, Takada Sanae 高田早苗, 'Shokumin wo sakan ni subeshi' 「殖民を盛んにすべし」, Yomiuri Shimbun 読売新聞, 29 May 1890, in Nishida Taketoshi (ed.) 西田長寿編, Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 91, Meiji shimbunjin bungaku shū 『明治文学全集 第91巻 明治新聞人文学集』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1979), p. 169.


71 Yokō Tōsaku 横尾東作, 'Nanyō kōkai setsuritsu taii' 「南洋公会設立大意」, February 1885, reproduced in Irie, Meiji nanshin shikō, pp. 73-75. Yokō instead went on to invest great amounts of money and effort into mostly disastrous maritime trade projects. See Peattie, Nanyō, p. 22.
in the region, some members also expressed a desire to 'guide surrounding areas towards freedom and independence', or to liberate colonized peoples from Western control. Henry Frei suggests that proponents of this notion were also making a veiled critique of Japanese state policy, for such suggestions 'sought to drive home the point that Japan, too, should throw off Western treaty-bondage and assert herself more.'

Seikyōsha figures also demonstrated a keen interest in the circumstances of the lower socio-economic strata. Sugiura Shigetake (Jūgō, 1855-1924) became the first among them to join these two interests in a short but well-known 1886 speech and later text that encouraged 'new commoners' to migrate southwards. Sugiura, a Buddhist scholar, scientist, and later instructor of the Shōwa emperor, was one of the more prominent intellectuals of his time. He criticized society’s treatment of ‘new commoners’ because by causing that part of the populace to despair, prejudice and discrimination were preventing them from contributing to the country to their full potential. Observing that legal equality had proven ineffective in changing customary practices involving denigration and avoidance, he argued that emigration to the Philippines would be the answer to the plight of ‘new commoners’. There, emigrants...
could take up arms to assist in the overthrow of Spanish colonial rulers, and thereby better themselves while simultaneously extending the Japanese sphere of influence.\(^{74}\)

Following closely on the heels of Yokõ Tósaku, Sugiura was among the first to associate 'new commoner' emigration and emancipation with Japanese southwards expansion. His plan also marked the first occasion that elite purveyors of such ideas attempted to obtain the approbation of 'new commoners'. This was significant, given that under the legal regime of Meiji Japan, it was virtually inconceivable for the authorities to force a section of the population to emigrate.

Within his text, Sugiura indicated that such southern islands were a utopian place where targets of prejudice might freely build a new society. These pleasant visions were obviously devices intended to arouse interest in emigration. There were also other less obvious dimensions to his speech. Aware that his plan was worthless without the interest of 'new commoners', Sugiura tried to influence them directly. According to a review of his speech in the Chūgai Nippō, Sugiura distributed several hundred copies of it, presumably in 'new commoner' districts.\(^{75}\) He clearly expected something to come of this distribution, for later in an interview with the 'buraku' liberation campaigner Okamoto Wataru, he complained that Okamoto was the first to

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74 Sugiura Shigetake 杉浦重剛, ‘Han Kai yume monogatari’「漢嘨夢物語」, in Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.) 吉野作造編, Meiji bunka zenshū, vol. 21, Shakai hen 『明治文化全集 第21巻 社会篇』 (東京: 日本評論社, 1928), pp. 457-463 (hereafter MBZ: 21). The Han Kai of the story's title was well-known, at least among scholars acquainted with the Chinese classics. Originally a lowly restauranteur and butcher, Han Kai (Fan Kuai 樊噣, ？-189 BCE) rose to become a general under Liu Bang (劉邦, 259-195 BCE), the founder of the Han dynasty. Doubtless Sugiura wished to suggest that former 'eta' status could likewise be overcome by participation in colonial expansion schemes.

75 ‘Han Kai yume monogatari’「漢嘨夢物語」, Chūgai Nippō 『中外日報』, 10 November 1886, in KBSS: 3, p. 552.
respond to the article. ‘Already some decades have passed since I made public [that piece], but there has been no response at all from you *buraku* people.’

Another interview conducted by Okamoto Wataru with Fukumoto Nichinan (1857-1921) tends to confirm that some kind of attempt was made to encourage ‘new commoners’ to emigrate. Also prominent in the Seikyōsha movement, Fukumoto was close to Sugiura, and transcribed Sugiura’s 1886 speech. Fukumoto displayed a lifelong interest in foreign matters, voyaging through the Philippines during the third decade of the Meiji period, and later agitating against the French colonial regime in Indochina, and also spending time in southern China and Taiwan. According to his account, he and Sugiura had aimed to ‘form a new commoner army and occupy an island in the Nanyō, create a new Japanese territory, and contribute to the deliverance of *burakumin* and to the development of Japan.’ Fukumoto said, presumably referring to his 1889 stay in the Philippines, that one of his southern voyages had been in order to check if their plan was practicable. But he regretted that they encountered so little interest among ‘new commoners’ in Japan that they abandoned the idea.

Also in 1886, the *Yomiuri* newspaper published two articles that appealed directly to ‘new commoners’, calling on them to emigrate. Sugiura Shigetake in fact

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76 Okamoto Wataru 岡本弥, *Tokushu buraku no kaihō* 『特殊部落の解放』(東京: 警醒社, 1921), p. 241. The lack of a response may also have had something to do with the difficult prose style used in this text.


78 Incidentally, Sugiura Shigetake is said to have profoundly influenced the argument for southwards empire-building made by a man named Suganuma Sadakaze (田村 晟) in 1888. In 1889, Suganuma voyaged on a fact-finding tour to the Philippines (where he died of cholera some months later) accompanied by Fukumoto Nichinan. See Yano Tōru 矢野鴻, *Nihon no nanyō shikan* 『日本の南洋史観』(東京: 中央公論社, 1979), pp. 39-40, 65.

79 Okamoto, *Tokushu buraku no kaihō*, p. 266.
wrote for the *Yomiuri* between 1886 and 1888. This coincidence suggests that he may have written these two articles, or at least played some role in their publication, especially given that they contained ideas similar to those expressed by Sugiura. The two articles argued that ‘new commoners’ would be invaluable in the colonies because of their strong physiques and endurance, which they were said to have demonstrated in battle at the very end of the Edo period (see chapter five). The author/s stated that ‘new commoners’ were unable to develop to their full potential in Japan as a result of prejudices against them. Given that situation, emigration was suggested to be necessary for social harmony, and for the full development of ‘new commoner’ (and by extension Japanese) productive potential. Raising the Japanese flag over a new colony, ‘new commoner’ emigrants would ‘develop a new Japan’, restore ‘new commoner’ pride, and ‘demonstrate the might of our Japan’. In short, the author/s of these texts announced that participation in colonial projects was the way for ‘new commoners’ to gain full recognition of their virtues or patriotic qualities.

Yanase Keisuke (1867-1896) also combined the themes of southwards expansion and ‘new commoner’ emancipation in his work, ‘Extra-societal society etahinin’, which was published posthumously in 1901. Yanase was born and raised in Fukuoka prefecture’s Kurume city, in an area dotted with ‘new commoner’ communities. After studying law in Tokyo at the institutions that today are known as

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81 ‘Shinheimin ron’ 『新平民論』, *Yomiuri Shinbun* 『読売新聞』, 5 June 1886, in *KBSS*: 3, p. 551.
82 ‘Shinheimin shoshi ni gekisu’ 『新平民諸氏に檄す』, *Yomiuri Shinbun* 『読売新聞』, 3 July 1886, in *KBSS*: 3, pp. 551-552.
Chūō University and Nihon University, and becoming acquainted with people such as Sugiura Shigetake and Ōe Taku, he returned to his hometown as a schoolteacher in 1894. He remained only for a short time, however. With the establishment of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan in 1895 as a result of the settlement provisions of the Sino-Japanese war, Yanase moved to Taiwan to join the colonial administration, and he died there the following year of dysentery. 83

In his work on ‘buraku’ issues, which probably was completed in 1895, he claimed that the contemporary reasons for discrimination against ‘new commoners’ included their moral depravity, ignorance, and uncouthness. To treat these defects, Yanase prescribed the civilizing influences of education and religion. He also proposed relocation, and named Canada, the United States, Australia, Siberia and Hokkaido as suitable lands in which they might make a new home. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he dwelt in most detail upon Taiwan, declaring it to be a land where the Japanese race was destined to flourish. Describing it as Japan’s southern gateway, Yanase argued that ‘new commoner’ villages should be relocated there to help protect the home islands. To that end, Yanase called for the aid of eminent men, and also the state. 84 Despite their faults, he considered ‘new commoners’ sufficiently patriotic and reliable that they might be entrusted the important function of establishing and manning Japanese colonial outposts.

It is unsure whether he took any direct action to realize this vision before his death. But the well-known labour policy academic and social reformer Kuwada

84 Yanase Keisuke 柳瀬健介, ‘Shakaigai no shakai, eta hinin’ 『社会外の社会従多非人』, in MBZ: 21, pp. 150-152.
Kumazō, who had been a close associate of Yanase’s in Tokyo (the two conducted study tours of local ‘buraku’ communities together), is reported to have attempted to bring about ‘new commoner’ emigration to Taiwan around that time. In 1911, Okada Chōei recalled in the journal Social Policy, ‘After the Sino-Japanese war, he [Kuwada Kumazō] planned to send new commoners of the home islands to Taiwan, which had come under our rule, and in developing that island, bring happiness to the lives of our miserable comrades’. According to Okada, that plan had influential backing. Even so, and although there was considerable emigration to Taiwan around that time, it ultimately came to nothing.\(^{86}\)

Similar appeals and plans for southwards ‘buraku’ emigration continued to appear during the early-twentieth century, with the journalist and pedagogue Nanbu Roan suggesting in 1902 that the best way to improve the situation of ‘new commoners’ would be to educate them so as to be of use in actual and prospective colonies such as Korea, China and the islands of the Nanyō.\(^{87}\) Nanbu reaffirmed that position some decades later in an interview with Okamoto Wataru, repeating that

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86 Okada Chōei 岡田弔影, ‘Kankyaku sareta shakai mondai’ 開戦された社会問題, Shakai Seisaku 社会政策, March 1911, in KBSS: 5, p. 457. Korea after the Russo-Japanese war, when it became a Japanese ‘protectorate’, and then after its annexation in 1910, would obviously have been a potential destination for such emigration schemes. In yet another interview conducted by Okamoto Wataru, the one-time governor of the colony of Korea, Terauchi Masaki, hinted that such emigration might have taken place. Okamoto, Tokushū buraku no kaihō, pp. 286-289.

emigration, whether to the Japanese colonies or elsewhere, was necessary to allow 'new commoners' to make something of themselves.⁸⁸

Between 1890 and 1910, general southwards emigration increased considerably, although figures are not at all comparable to those for Hokkaido. The proportion of 'new commoners' among emigrants is impossible to determine. Currently available details about the experiences of southwards-bound 'buraku' emigrants are even scantier than in the case of Hokkaido, and there appear to have been no systematic 'buraku' emigration programs directed towards the Nanyō during the Meiji and Taisho periods.

Table 2. Meiji and early-Taisho emigration trends by region, 1868-1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1868-1880</th>
<th>1881-1890</th>
<th>1891-1900</th>
<th>1901-1910</th>
<th>1911-1920</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>20,450</td>
<td>114,617</td>
<td>116,159</td>
<td>48,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/South America</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>19,597</td>
<td>85,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and East Asia</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>11,173</td>
<td>26,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>20,450</td>
<td>116,723</td>
<td>146,929</td>
<td>167,273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Gaimushō Ryōji Ijūbu (ed.), Wagakoku no kaigai hatten, vol. 2, p. 137 (These figures are incomplete, lacking those especially for the 'Asia-Pacific' region; they serve only to illustrate general trends).

Nonetheless, it seems likely that utopian visions of the south exerted some influence, even if only on a psychological level, on late-Meiji and Taishō-period 'buraku' communities. Sumii Sué's saga, 'The river with no bridge', written mostly during the mid-twentieth century, contains a scene set during the early-Taisho years in which one of the characters expresses the opinion that the only effective way for

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⁸⁸ Okamoto, Tokushu buraku no kaihō, p. 260.
‘buraku’ residents to escape prejudice would be to migrate to the Nanyō.⁸⁹ Suggesting that portrayal to be historically accurate, Itowaka Ryūko (1890-1984), a prominent figure in the Suiheisha Association’s women’s section, recalled that her father, who died in 1906, had planned to bring about the emigration of ‘buraku’ residents to the Nanyō, and even commenced fundraising efforts to that end.⁹⁰

A similar and better-known such scheme surfaced in the late 1910s. Influenced by the United States’ president Woodrow Wilson’s talk of national self-determination in the wake of the First World War, members of an association known as the ‘Swallow Club’ (Tsukamekai 燕会), who included Saikō Mankichi (1895-1970) and Sakamoto Seiichirō (1892-1987), came up with a plan to bring about emigration by ‘buraku’ residents to the Dutch-controlled island of Celebes (now Sulawesi). Sakamoto, Saikō, and fifteen others prepared for that venture by studying geography, industry, economics and the ‘Malay’ language. Going to Celebes, they planned to inflame anti-Dutch sentiment among residents, lead an independence movement, and create an independent state of their own. As it turned out, they were unable to put that plan into practice because the Japanese government refused to grant them travel documents. Sakamoto recounted in 1971 how they were told that the level of anti-Japanese sentiment in Celebes was such that the government could not consent to their departure.⁹¹ Subsequently, central figures in the Swallow Club, including Komai Kisaku (1897-1945), Sakamoto Seiichirō and Saikō Mankichi, determined to work

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within Japan to change social attitudes; they were among the founders of the
Suiheisha ‘buraku’ liberation movement established in 1922.

Migrant labour

Beginning in the late 1880s, officials and intellectuals began extolling the
virtues of a form of emigration that, although less amenable to romantic
representation, was often an effective way of improving the economic situation of
poor people: overseas contract labour. For much of the first two decades of the Meiji
period, the Japanese government held reservations about permitting subjects to
engage in this practice. Official reluctance sprang largely from certain misadventures
with labour migration schemes in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Critics of the
government had, for example, likened one early-Meiji case of contract migration to
slavery, while reports that contract labourers in Hawaii were being maltreated forced
the government to engage in costly attempts to repatriate them.92

National pride was the main factor giving rise to government concern for the
welfare of poor emigrants, who would rarely if ever have been treated with such
official solicitude within Japan. This is to say, despite their lowly domestic social
status, poor labourers represented Japan once they were overseas. After such
imbroglios, and with a growing sense that poor labourers did not project a desirable
image of Japan to people of other countries, the authorities determined to decline
permission for labour migration schemes.93 In line with that position, up until 1884,

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the Meiji government rejected expressions of interest in Japanese migrant labourers from countries including the United States of America, Holland, Spain, Australia, and Peru.\(^{94}\)

However, plans to send some of the numerous poor people overseas gradually won over influential converts. Intellectuals and officials came to the opinion that the emigration of poor people as migrant labour would at once relieve the burden they placed on the domestic economy, lead to remittances of foreign capital that would bolster the Japanese economy, and help create future export markets. Further, migrants might also develop a valuable sense of initiative and adventure, and acquire a sense of labour discipline.\(^{95}\) With official, media and migration company encouragement, overseas contract labour schemes developed rapidly from the late 1880s onwards, drawing their recruits mainly from the poorer strata.

In practice, most overseas movements from ‘buraku’ communities appear to have consisted of temporary labour stints, particularly to the United States and Hawaii. Reports presented to a 1912 conference on ‘buraku’ matters sponsored by the Interior Ministry suggest that overseas labour migration had become almost commonplace by then. Akashi Tamizō (1856-1920), a prominent ‘buraku’ politician, banker and entrepreneur, was one of the speakers from Kyoto. He reported that ‘comparatively large numbers of people have found success as foreign migrant labour’.\(^{96}\) Ono Kishirō, a delegate from Okayama, indicated that until the recent introduction of stricter United States restrictions on ‘Asian’ labour inflow, numerous

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96 Akashi Tamizō 明石貞造, 15 November 1912, in KNBS: 7, p. 28.
‘buraku’ residents had been going there and remitting substantial amounts of money. 97 Shiraokawa Jōsuke, head of the Mikata district in Fukui prefecture, similarly reported that prior to the recently tightened US immigration restrictions, one hundred people had departed annually as temporary migrant workers, remitting over 100,000 yen every year to ‘buraku’ communities in his district. 98

Other media reports suggest that the above remarks reflected a fairly widespread trend in Japan’s ‘buraku’ communities. A 1912 article published in the *Doyō Shinbun* on a community in Kōchi prefecture indicated that out of a population of 2,000, some 19 men were working in the US and remitting money that was improving the economic situation of their hometown. 99 In Wakayama, the *Kii Mainichi Shinbun* reported that overseas labour migration from Arita district had immensely improved the situation of those who remained. 100 Economic needs and desires brought forth many ‘buraku’ residents into an international labour market.

**The effects of migration**

Meiji-period proponents of ‘buraku’ emigration basically advised that the presence of ‘buraku’ residents in Japan proper was a problem. No doubt informed by discourses ascribing ‘foreignness’ and other negative attributes to that part of the population, they claimed that as well as giving rise to national disharmony, ‘buraku’

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100 ‘Arita gun ni okeru shinheimin no jōtai’ 「有田郡における新平民の状態」, *Kii Mainichi Shinbun* 『紀伊毎日新聞』, 9 May 1907, in *KBSS*: 4, pp. 268-269.
residents did not contribute to national development as much as they might, and then asserted that emigration was the best way for them to overcome those faults.

Recognizing a certain degree of popular subjectivity, these suggestions were obviously of a different order to Edo-period suggestions about forcibly mobilizing ‘outcast’ status people for colonial purposes. Meiji-period recommendations that ‘new commoners’ emigrate reflected the entry of a different form of authority, associated with the becoming of people into national subjects upon whom there was an obligation to engage in activities beneficial to the national interest, onto the scene. Lack of contribution to Japan’s progress was susceptible to being represented as a patriotic ‘deficiency’, with rectification of that situation open to depiction as the patriotic duty of ‘buraku’ residents. Emigration, whether for colonial purposes or in order to engage in temporary labouring activities, was portrayed as an important way for ‘buraku’ residents to make something of themselves and thereby to contribute to their country.101

The practice of this particular expression of patriotism also imposed certain obligations upon the state. Intellectuals argued at a general level that to make sure emigrants remained willing to contribute to Japan’s expansion and development after departure, care had to be taken to ensure that they did not lose their affective ties to Japan. In other words, the state had to foster emigrant love for the homeland by helping them to emigrate.102 Applying this principle to the case of ‘buraku’ residents,

101 For a look at the expression of this notion in fiction, see Michael Bourdaghs, ‘The disease of nationalism, the empire of hygiene’, positions east asia cultures critique, vol. 6, no. 3, 1998, pp. 637-673; and Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, Ika to dōka no hazama—hisabetsu buraku ninshiki no kiseki 『異化と同化の間—被差別部落認識の軌跡』(東京：青木書店, 1999), pp. 63-65.

commentators argued that not only ought able-bodied ‘buraku’ men and women participate in the ‘great national duty of constructing a new [Japanese] realm’, but also that the government should facilitate their participation.  

State assistance with the implementation of ‘buraku’ emigration programs was necessary to ensure emigrant affection for the homeland endured, and that was important from the perspective of future colonial development.  

Emigration was to be a mutually profitable project that engaged emigrants and the state in a complex web of duties turning around national development and patriotism.

With regard to ‘buraku’ emigrants, by referring to factors such as ‘social disharmony’ and their ‘deficient’ contribution to the national cause, commentators implied that they were less than fully ‘Japanese’. By emigrating from the main Japanese islands, writers suggested, they could prove their patriotism and become full citizens. While obviously it is difficult to gauge if that discourse had any practical influence, I wish to end this chapter by considering some senses in which migration-related practices did draw ‘buraku’ residents into or nearer to the national community.

Intellectuals and officials emphasized three main forms of migration: settling in Hokkaido, to participate in the development of that territory; moving to the Nanyō, to extend southwards the Japanese sphere of influence; and engaging in temporary labour stints overseas, to assist the country economically.

The territory of Hokkaido appears to have been the most attractive destination for those who chose permanent emigration in their attempts to improve their lives.


104 Yamakawa Saburō 山川三郎, ‘Hinmin wo ika ni shobun subeki ka’「貧民を如何に処分すべきか」, January 1914, in KBSS: 6, pp. 403-406.
Whatever their motivations for doing so, ‘buraku’ residents who settled in Hokkaido became complicit in the dispossession of the indigenous Ainu. In that sense, or from the Ainu perspective, as well as from the perspective that no ‘buraku’ communities developed in Hokkaido, those emigrants arguably succeeded in becoming ‘ordinary’ Japanese.

Despite the number of people who recommended southwards emigration, there are few recorded cases of people departing to colonize and develop island utopias. While Taishō-period plans for constructing something akin to a colonial ‘buraku’ state in the Southern Islands reveal that the discourse about colonizing the Nanyō was influential, they also suggest that planners intended to make some kind of a break with Japan. That aim faded due to the denial of Japanese government permission to emigrate. Remaining in Japan as a result of the government’s position that they were Japanese nationals who required protection from exposure to anti-Japanese sentiment overseas, those involved instead began working in ever more organized fashion to bring about ‘equality’ amongst the inhabitants of the Japanese islands. Their energies were thus re-oriented towards the realization of national harmony, or to the improvement of Japanese society such that it would recognize their claim to be fully or equally Japanese.

Temporary contract labour stints were probably the most common pattern of ‘buraku’ emigration during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This practice was beneficial both to the state, which as a result enjoyed an improved economic situation, and perhaps also to emigrants, their families, and the communities they lived in. In going overseas, emigrants came to the notice of the state and received, often for the first time, its protection. Further, the dealings of
migrant labourers with ‘foreigners’ were to a great extent founded not on their hometown origins, their industrious qualities or their ‘descent’, but on their country of origin. Their experiences imparted to people a sense of being ‘Japanese’, or else confirmed and reinforced such a sentiment.

Although there are few visible indications that patriotism motivated people to emigrate, it is conceivable that a common side-effect of migration-related experiences was to encourage emigrants to acquire a stronger sense of belonging to a Japanese national community. Of course, despite the enthusiasm manifested by parts of the intelligentsia and officialdom, emigration was clearly of relatively minor importance as a means of nationalization, at least from the perspective of the numbers of people involved. With a view to considering some more common paths whereby people came to adopt explicitly ‘national’ practices and thought, the following chapter turns to the role of the military.
Chapter five

The uses of national service

Social advancement in the Edo period

Late-Meiji period ‘buraku’ residents used their performance of martial acts in the nation’s service as a basis for claiming the status of true subjects of the emperor whom it was improper for society to denigrate. Beginning by briefly examining Edo-period popular concerns about improving social position, this chapter goes on to look at the establishment of the linkage between national service and the enjoyment of social recognition that was expressed in such late-Meiji attacks on discrimination.

The status system of the Edo period greatly curtailed people’s ability to move upwards out of the status group into which they were born.¹ But people aspired to acquire improved recognition and position. Edo-period nouveaux

¹ Downwards status mobility, through crime and impoverishment, was another matter entirely. And with the market economy’s development through the Edo period, class mobility within status groups became increasingly common. Peter Duus, Feudalism in Japan (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993, 3rd ed.), p. 92.
riches merchants, who were commonly disdained by people of military class as selfish profit-seekers, attempted to counter negative perceptions of their commercial activities by asserting their utility to society. They claimed their social status was incongruent with their economic importance as ‘faithful and hardworking subjects who performed indispensable functions for the collectivity and deserved prestige’. Peasants asserted that they were due more consideration too, because the taxes they paid were the economic foundation of government.

Overall, people of Edo-period society’s commoner classes argued that their economic significance to rulers merited greater official recognition, which was no doubt imagined to take such forms as better treatment in dealings with officials, the right to wear swords and have an officially recognized family name, and of course lower taxes.

People of ‘kawata’ status too, took steps to improve their social position. Commonly referring to their own economic and social significance, actions taken during the last years of the Edo period focused on eliminating the pejorative status designation ‘eta’. One of the most celebrated such instances dates to 1867, when Bakufu officials tried to levy extra taxes from the ‘kawata’ residents of Watanabe village in Settsu province (Osaka) to help pay for its military operations against imperialist forces. Villagers proposed that in return for their

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financial assistance, the Bakufu should do away with the term ‘eta’. The author of this Watanabe village petition—probably a very wealthy drum merchant named Matauemon—stated that the Buddhist proscription on killing animals was at the root of their social excommunication. But given that the state had developed friendly relations with people of foreign meat-eating countries, he argued that such denigration was no longer valid. Moreover, in return for abolition, Watanabe village residents would undertake to labour more productively for the sake of the country, and engage in military activities if the Bakufu so required. The writer even suggested that villagers would be prepared to bankrupt themselves to provide more funds for the war effort against imperial forces if the Bakufu granted their proposal and desisted from using the term ‘eta’.

As forces aligned with the emperor deposed the Bakufu soon afterwards, this proposal came to nothing. But several similar petitions appeared after the change of government in 1868. In early 1870, Ganemon, the ‘kawata’ village elder of Kyoto’s Rendaino village (now a part of Kyoto city) requested of the Kyoto authorities that they cease referring to them as ‘eta’. Ganemon listed a range of reasons why the authorities ought to do so. He detailed their illustrious associations with the imperial house, and pointed out that the state had forced

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6 This attempted trade of money for status came after a major 1866 peasant uprising in Settsu and Izumi provinces had undermined government authority. Harada Tomohiko 原田伴彦, ‘Dan Naiki mibun hikiage ikken’ 「彈内記身分引上一件」, in Ogushi Natsumi 大曳夏身, Kindai hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū 『近代被差別部落史研究』 (東京: 明石書店, 1980), p.4.

7 This 5/1867 petition is reproduced in numerous sources. See, for example, Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落解放研究所編, Shiryōshū Meiji shōki hisabetsu buraku 『史料集 明治初期被差別部落』(大阪: 解放出版社, 1986), pp. 4-5.

8 While some Kyoto ‘outcasts’ did work for the imperial house until the early Meiji years, claims of historical ties to the emperor were based on old kawaramakimono scrolls (河原巻物) commonly found in former ‘outcast’ communities, which mixed Buddhist and Japanese legend. See Morooka Sukeyuki 師岡佐行, ‘Buraku to tennōsei’ 「部落と天皇制」, in Minami Hiroshi et
their ancestors into the leather-related occupations that caused people to denigrate them. Adding that most of their number engaged in agriculture and dutifully paid taxes, he noted also that they were loyal to the new regime, that the times were changing, and that the government had expressed a desire to do away with old ways.9

Led by Ganemon’s son Shigebe, a loose coalition of Kansai ‘kawata’ status elites made another such attempt late in 1870. Shigebe proposed to the Kyoto authorities that local ‘kawata’ status people would contribute to the country in return for improvements in their social status. Like his father, he linked past and current economic production with a right to better social status. Representing ‘kawata’ status people from all the surrounding provinces,10 he further offered to contribute labour and capital for the construction of a railway between Fushimi and Kyoto on the condition that officials cease using the term ‘eta’ to refer to them.11

In 1871, just before the government announced the abolition of the various ‘outcast’ status groups, residents of a community in the Taka district of Harima province (contemporary Hyogo prefecture) also submitted a petition stating they were ‘kawata’ status people whose primary occupation was

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10 According to Shigebe, five hundred ‘outcast’ villages of Yamashiro, Yamato, Kawachi, Izumi, Settsu, Kii, Tanba, Ōmi, and Harima provinces, or roughly contemporary Kyoto, Osaka, Wakayama, Hyōgo, Nara and Shiga prefectures.

11 Shigebe’s petition of the 17/12/1870, is reproduced in KBSS: 1, pp. 254-255. Fushimi then lay between Kyoto and Osaka, although today it is classified as part of the Kyoto city area.
agriculture. Although most were tenant farmers, they paid taxes like all other peasants, and in fact had worked the land for generations. As conscientious taxpayers, they called upon officials to cease addressing them as ‘eta’.

Those who drafted these various petitions held that there were no good reasons for the authorities to denigrate them by calling them ‘eta’, and called on officials to recognize that by eliminating that pejorative status appellation. We must note that these petitioners tended not to call for the disestablishment of the status system itself, or for the establishment of legal equality. As others have remarked with regard to the commoner classes, despite attempting to gain increased official consideration by calling on the authorities to re-evaluate their utility, people did not often attempt to change the existing social system. Merchants and peasants were dissatisfied ‘not so much with the social hierarchy as with the special injustice of one’s position within it.’ That appears to have been the case with people of ‘kawata’ status also. When the great political and social changes of the 1860s and 1870s stimulated their hopes of realizing a better life, they initially asserted their own socio-economic merit in an attempt to rid themselves of the most derogatory term that people used to refer to them.

Prominent members of the early-Meiji ruling classes were evidently rather taken by the ‘outcast’ offers of labour and financial contributions to public works projects. In a submission to the ruling Council of State that reflected the

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12 This late 1871 petition is reproduced in KBSS: 1, p. 341.
13 In 1913, a former Ehime official recalled that in 1870, an Ehime prefecture ‘eta’ status boss named Hanemon, informed by the 1869 debates in the Tokyo Kōgisho, presented domainal officials with a petition calling for them to be treated the same as commoners. See Yamada Takehachirō, in ‘Shidankai sokkiroku dai 151 shū’ in Shidankai sokkiroku dai 151 shū, 1913, in KBSS: 1, 436-439.
14 Thomas C. Smith, Native sources of Japanese industrialization, 1750-1920 (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 154. Yasumaru Yoshio observes that peasant demands were not anti-systemic in the fact that they were founded upon calls for a reversion to benevolent governance, but were anti-systemic in terms of the practical effects of direct action. Yasumaru Yoshio 安丸良夫, Nihon no kindaika to minshū shisō 『日本の近代化と民衆思想』 (東京: 平凡社, 1999), p. 234.
influence of the above-mentioned petitions, the Kyoto prefecture authorities stated that ‘eta’ status people should gradually be emancipated, starting with those who ‘undertake projects beneficial to the state and useful to the people’.  

Subsequently, the Civil Affairs Ministry presented the Council of State with a proposal, which was based largely upon research undertaken by Ōe Taku, that called for wealthy and useful ‘eta’ status people to be granted commoner status. Other influential political figures such as Kido Kōin and Sasaki Takayuki likewise were of the opinion that ‘outcast’ elites ought to be elevated to commoner status.

Ultimately, the Council of State decided against gradually raising ‘outcast’ status people to commonerhood. In the summer of 1871, the government rejected the Civil Affairs Ministry proposal, and announced the immediate abolition of all ‘outcast’ status groups. One of a series of measures taken by government officials to provide a foundation on which to construct a modern Japanese state, the decree went further than any ‘outcast’ petitioners had proposed. But before considering the post-emancipation circumstances of ‘new commoners’, it is necessary to look at some instances in which small numbers of ‘outcast’ status people successfully improved their legal status during the last years of Tokugawa rule.

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15 Kyoto fu gushin 京都府具申, 18/12/1870, in KBSS: 1, pp. 256-258.
16 Ōe Taku (Tenya) 1847-1921, was a prominent anti-Bakufu activist from Tosa (Kōchi). He became known not just for his proposals concerning ‘outcast’ abolition, but also as the Kanagawa magistrate who presided over the 1872 slavery case involving Chinese workers on board the Peruvian ship, the Maria Luz, as well as for his involvement in ‘buraku’ reform programs in the Taishō period.
18 As recorded by Sasaki Takayuki in his diary in 1871, reproduced in KBSS: 1, pp. 64-65.
Military action and status promotion

During the 1850s, the Japanese ruling classes engaged in lengthy debate over how to respond to the European and American demands for trade and friendship treaties, which were backed by threats of military action. Elite opinion was divided. Many Bakufu officials held that they had no option but to 'open the country', while most domainal lords supported a continuation of the policy of limiting Japan’s international dealings. But in light of evident Japanese military inferiority, all parties recognized the importance of boosting military power.

In this context, and breaking with the longstanding monopoly of bushi status people on military functions, officials began proposing the recruitment of lower status people as soldiers. The eminent Chōshū domain (Yamaguchi) official Murata Seifū (Kiyokaze, 1783-1855) argued in an 1853 essay that in the face of domestic and especially foreign pressures on the extant order, all people needed to be united in military union, ‘without distinction of high or low’, and including ‘zakko’ (雑戸). This was a term originally used to designate an ‘outcast’ group during the middle of the first millennium CE under the Yamato court; Murata was presumably referring to people of ‘eta’ or equivalent status.19 The domain’s resident elder, Masuda Danjō (1833-1864), likewise recommended in 1858 that since bushi status people were too few to guard the extensive domainal coastline, ‘it is imperative that peasant soldiers be drafted’.20 The notion that it was necessary to recruit soldiers from all parts of society became influential during the 1850s, at least in Chōshū.

Chōshū officials began implementing such schemes in the 1860s. The domain’s elites had conducted a campaign to force the Bakufu to proclaim an order to ‘expel the barbarians’ (jōi 播夷) from Japan during the late 1850s and early 1860s. Their efforts, which made use of the authority of the emperor, caused the Bakufu to order all domains to commence such expulsions in mid-1863. There were no foreigners in Chōshū, which nonetheless was the only domain to take action on the stipulated date. Military commanders overcame the local deficit of foreigners by firing on the foreign ships that passed their shores. That brought immediate retaliation, as well as more sustained attacks from both Western naval forces, and from the Bakufu the following year.\(^{21}\) It was in no small part due to military necessity that Chōshū domain officials began recruiting soldiers from among the lower social strata.

Takasugi Shinsaku (1839-1867), the son of a wealthy Chōshū retainer, formed the first militia units incorporating non-bushi status people in 1863.\(^{22}\) He had seen at first hand the situation of colonized China during a voyage to Shanghai in 1862. That experience reportedly reinforced his desire to help Japan avoid such a fate, and stimulated his interest in mobilizing the masses for military purposes.\(^{23}\) Takasugi’s recruits included peasants, townspeople, Shinto and Buddhist priests, and low-ranking bushi. But ‘outcasts’ had no place in his vision. He made that clear in an appeal for more able-bodied recruits, stating


explicitly that people of ‘eta’ and ‘hinin’ status were not to be recruited.\textsuperscript{24} The
leader of one of his units, Minamino Ichirō, gave practical expression to this
sentiment by cutting down a recruit who had been revealed to be of ‘miyaban’
status.\textsuperscript{25} However, the domain did enlist low status people such as sumo
wrestlers and hunters.

It was only after Yoshida Toshimarō (1841-1864), a former student of the
early ‘nationalist’ intellectual Yoshida Shōin, proposed the military use of ‘eta’
status people in an 1863 report to the Chōshū authorities that officials slowly
moved to enlist ‘outcasts’ as well. Toshimarō stated, ‘If we are to subordinate eta
and hinin in perpetuity […] we must rapidly convert them into soldiers’. In his
view, the domain authorities needed to direct potentially troublesome ‘outcast’
energies towards useful ends. In order to arouse the requisite martial enthusiasm
in them, he argued that officials should promise to elevate those who performed
military functions to commoner status.\textsuperscript{26}

The basic points of Yoshida’s proposal reappeared in the subsequent
Chōshū policy of ‘outcast’ recruitment.\textsuperscript{27} Domain officials announced to people

\textsuperscript{24}Takasugi’s address of 6/1/1865 is quoted in Kobayashi Shigeru 小林茂, \textit{Chōshū han Meiji
\textsuperscript{25} In a brief report, Minamino Ichirō, the leader of the Sogeki unit (猟撃隊) stated that he had cut
down a man named Ichizō for having enlisted under false pretences on the 11/7/1864. See
Minamino Ichirō 南野市郎, in Akitada Yoshihiko et al. (eds.) 秋田嘉和ほか編, \textit{Hennen
365 (hereafter \textit{HSSS}). Miyaban were only to be found in Chōshū; as the term’s Chinese characters
suggest (宮番), such people performed a variety of shrine-related duties and were roughly
equivalent to ‘hinin’ status watchmen elsewhere.
\textsuperscript{26} See Kitagawa Ken 北川健, ‘Shinsengumi to Chasentai to Ishindan’ 『新撰組と茶釜隊と維新
団』, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落問題研究所編, \textit{Buraku no seikatsuushi 『部落の生
283.
\textsuperscript{27} The Chōshū policy of conscription is outlined in Nunobiki Toshio 布引敏雄, ‘Chōshū han no
hisabetsu buraku’ 『長州藩の被差別部落』, in Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落解放研究所編,
\textit{Kinsei buraku no shiteki kenkyū}, gekan 『近世部落の史的研究 下巻』(大阪: 解放出版社, 1979), pp. 234-239, and at more length in Nunobiki, \textit{Chōshū buraku kaihōshi}. He suggests that
this conscription policy was ‘astonishing’ and contrary to the principle that only samurai
of ‘*eta*’ status that, ‘with regard to the expulsion of foreign raiders [*izoku* 異賊...]

those who wish to serve on the battlefield and who meet the following conditions

[the strong, the courageous, the fleet of foot, and the clever] will be elevated from *eta* status and given the right to carry one sword and wear *dōfuku*’ (胴服, a short coat something like a *haori* that usually only military class people wore).

Limiting recruitment to five people per hundred households, presumably to maintain agricultural production, officials directed interested persons to apply to their local magistrate. 28 Promising a fairly privileged commoner status that was much like *bushi* status in the fact that it entailed the right to carry a sword and wear a kind of military short coat, this policy presented some local ‘*eta*’ status people with a quite remarkable opportunity for social advancement. 29

The drafting of ‘outcasts’, like that of hunters, was in some ways a logical outcome of certain of their occupational duties. By and large, the common people of the Edo period were permitted neither to possess weapons, nor to engage in military activities. Hunters armed with muskets and charged with the control of wild boar and other troublesome animals in agricultural areas were one exception to this rule, ‘*kawata*’ and ‘*hinin*’ status people were another. The authorities required people of ‘outcast’ groups to engage in policing-related activities under *bushi* leadership, especially during the final decades of the Edo period. Such duties often included informing on peasant insurrection, helping to

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28 Yamaguchi han tatsu 山口藩達, 10/7/1863, in *HSSS*: 19, pp. 312-313.

29 Albert Craig suggests that the peasants who joined these militia units were motivated by the good pay (from the perspective of peasants), and more by the prospect of acquiring a sword and family names and becoming ‘fighting men’. See Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, pp. 273-274. These motivations would have functioned equally powerfully in the case of ‘outcast’ status people.
suppress rebellious incidents, acting as town and village watchmen, arresting, transporting and guarding criminals, and conducting executions. These customary functions were suited to military uses. Ishii Ryōsuke in fact maintains that ‘eta’ status settlements were originally formed and maintained by domainal lords not simply to produce and supply leather goods, but also to provide supplementary military forces (with ‘hinin’ their rural counterparts) in times of need.

Despite the fact that Chōshū domain first called for ‘outcast’ recruits in 1863, actual recruitment does not seem to have taken place until 1866. And rather than combating ‘foreign raiders’, the 1866 recruits fought in a minor civil war against Bakufu forces. Following the single-handed attempt to ‘expel the barbarians’ in 1863, punitive measures by Bakufu and Western forces had temporarily eroded Chōshū domain’s power. But a revolt by the Chōshū military, its alliance with Satsuma domain (Kagoshima) forces, and subsequent machinations involving the imperial court caused the Bakufu to launch another punitive expedition against Chōshū.

The ‘outcast’ status people who took part in this 1866 conflict formed two militia units, the Isshingumi or Renewal Team (一新組) and the Ishindan or Restoration Band (維新団). The former unit counted some one hundred and fifty ‘butchers’ (tosha 屠者, in other words, people of ‘eta’ status) recruited from Saba district who fought in what is today part of Hiroshima prefecture. The latter unit

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32 The first Bakufu expedition to subdue Chōshū in 1864 ended without combat on the promise of a more moderate approach by domainal officials and the suicide of domainal elders. The second Bakufu expedition was hampered by lack of money, civil unrest, outdated arms, and low morale. See Craig, Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration, pp. 327-328.
had three or four hundred members—‘eta’ status men from Kumage district—and they too fought in Hiroshima.\(^{33}\) While details about individual soldiers are unclear, they are recorded to have been exemplary soldiers.\(^{34}\) In the words of Kitagawa Ken, ‘Routing the Bakufu troops, they won a glorious victory, and on the occasion of their triumphant entry into the town of Iwata, even those who had spoken ill of them before their departure lauded them.’\(^{35}\)

Through military prowess, these men were able to rid themselves of ‘eta’ status and acquire commoner status (if and how this promotion was recognized by others is unclear).\(^{36}\) Later, in recognition of their wartime contributions to the emperor’s cause, Inoue Kaoru (1835-1915), a Chōshū official who served during the Meiji period as minister variously for Finance, Foreign Affairs, and the Interior, offered to elevate them still further to former military class. ‘The former soldiers declined this offer and asked instead to be given the land where they had undertaken rifle training’, and apparently this more practical plan was adopted.\(^{37}\)

\(^{33}\) ‘Tera kakochō’ 「寺過去帳」, 20/6/1866, in HSSS: 19, p. 506.

\(^{34}\) Officials of Mitarai and Ōchō villages in Hiroshima reported that the work of peasant and ‘kawata’ status troops the previous year had been ‘surprisingly excellent’ (batsuugun kiwadatsu 披群顔立). See ‘Nishiguchi he shukkin tsukamatsuri sōō nōhei narabini kawata no hatarakiburi no gi otazune ni tsuki kakitsuke wo mōshiageru’ 「西口へ出勤仕候農兵並革田揃振並義徵に付車上書附」, 3/1867, in HSSS: 21, pp. 538-539. As suggested by the wording of the text cited here, in Hiroshima domain, ‘kawata’ exceptionally remained the official status designation of people who elsewhere through the Edo period became referred to as ‘eta’.


\(^{36}\) As people’s status was determined by that of their household head, all dependents of these men acquired commoner status.


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‘Outcast’ status people accepted by Chōshū domain for military service only comprised a small fraction of the total ‘outcast’ population. Some men who were unable to join these official troops formed their own private militias, no doubt also hoping to win renown and higher status. A Chōshū domain ‘chasen’ status man named Kinsaku created one such unofficial unit in 1865. During a pilgrimage to Ise and then Kyoto, he had seen how men were forming militia bands from both lofty principles and for personal gain, and on returning home, he formed his own militia band of fellow ‘chasen’ status men. Kitagawa Ken has described their actions as follows. ‘Availing themselves of the opportunity provided by the war, they aimed to bring about their own betterment and liberation by gathering like-minded men and engaging in military activities’. Details about this unit’s actions are unclear, but Chōshū troops from Ishiyama Castle soon arrested them, for engaging in ‘suspicious acts’ according to one source,\(^{38}\) and on suspicion of ‘plotting with the enemy’ according to another.\(^{39}\) Imprisoned, Kinsaku wrested a short sword from a jailer during interrogation and committed suicide. His troop was disbanded.\(^{40}\)

Nunobiki Toshio has proposed that the authorities repressed this unit because they disapproved of civilian-organized militias that lay outside their command.\(^{41}\) Others suggest that domainal officials acted because of the risks that such semi-autonomous militias posed to local order.\(^{42}\) But it is also conceivable that the original charge of communicating with the enemy (Bakufu forces) was true. It was presumably because they saw a chance for self-improvement in the

\(^{38}\) Ogawa Ichuemon oboe 小川市右衛門覚, 9/3/ 1866, in HSSS: 19, p. 502.
\(^{39}\) ‘Ogasawara Tarōbē oboe 小笠原太郎兵衛覚, 3/1866, in HSSS: 19, p. 503.
\(^{40}\) Kitagawa, ‘Shinsengumi’, pp. 230-231.
\(^{41}\) Nunobiki, Chōshū buraku kaihō, pp. 272-276.
\(^{42}\) Hirota and Toshioka, ‘Yamaguchi’, pp. 174-175.
social disorder and official disarray of the moment that these men had acted.  

Few, if any, volunteered for military action because they had a powerful wish to defend domainal interests or to bring the emperor to power. Since they were attempting to take advantage of an unstable situation, and given that their chances of success almost certainly depended on choosing the winning side, it is likely that they would have tried to maintain relations with both Chōshū and Bakufu forces.  

If that was their strategy, however, obviously it backfired.

The best-known case of status promotion through military service involved the last Danzaemon and around sixty of his subordinates. Danzaemon, being the direct ruler of over 70,000 ‘outcast’ status people mostly in the Kantō region, and with some influence over several hundred thousand more, was a figure of considerable significance in the struggle between imperial and Bakufu forces. For the Bakufu, continuing ‘outcast’ involvement in customary order-keeping roles was indispensable, while Danzaemon’s support would naturally have been invaluable for the imperialist forces too. Both sides attempted to gain his support. Ultimately, and probably as a result of various personal friendships, the Bakufu won Danzaemon’s loyalty. Called upon to provide battlefield labourers for the Chōshū expedition, he selected over one hundred men and trained them out of his own pocket. Afterwards, notwithstanding Chōshū’s comprehensive military victory, the Bakufu granted first Danzaemon and later sixty of his men commoner status in return for their wartime services. No doubt this decision was not just recognition of past battlefield valour, but was

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44 See Uesugi, Meiji Ishit, p. 36.
45 Watanabe Hiroshi 渡辺広, Mikaihō buraku no keisei to tenkai—Kishū wo chōshin toshite 『未開放部落の形成と展開—紀州を中心として』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 1977), pp. 325-327.
also swayed by the three thousand gold pieces and other military equipment that Danzaemon had donated to the Bakufu.  

From the perspective of those involved, the significance of military recruitment lay in the fact that they were able to swap military service for improved social status. And this experiment with 'low-class' recruits presumably caused Chōshū officials, many of whom later filled high-ranking positions in the Meiji government, to realize that popular loyalty and service might be acquired by extending popular rights.

**Patriotism and loyalty**

The Meiji rulers who took power in 1868 faced a variety of domestic and foreign threats. In partial response, they acted to unite the former domainal armies into a single force under the command of the central government, and also to recruit members of the common people for an expanded national military.

As we have seen, some domains attracted recruits for their armies during the late-Edo years by offering them higher social status, and also by utilizing popular hatred of the Bakufu and existing taxation policies. Upon taking power,

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46 'Dan Naiki heimin to naru' 「弾内記平民となる」, *Edokai Shi* 『江戸会誌』, vol. 2, no. 9, September 1890, in *KBSS*: 3, pp. 121-123. Details of his military contributions are also described in 'Dan Naiki mibun hikiage ikken' 「弾内記身分引上件」, in *NSSS*: 14, pp. 461-480.


48 Fujinawa Akira 藤原彰, *Tennōsei to guntai* 『天皇制と軍隊』 (東京: 青木書店, 1978), pp. 80-81. Initially, the Meiji government's army consisted of former imperial troops (官軍), as well as soldiers from Tosa, Satsuma and Chōshū domains. Based on these troops, the government organized the Imperial Guard in 1871. But only small numbers of soldiers were involved, and thus a system of conscription was introduced.

49 In addition to the reasons suggested above, mobilization into these units had also relied on hatred of the Bakufu and excessive taxation (E. Herbert Norman, *Soldier and peasant in Japan: the origins of conscription* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), p. 38), as well as on 'a desire to improve their status by affiliation with warriors'. Smith, *Native sources*, pp. 150-151.
rulers needed to find new ways to bring about mass mobilization. The fact that popular participation in political affairs had been severely restricted during the Edo period made this task difficult. While it may be something of an exaggeration to say the masses had been ‘driven into the narrow confines of their private lives as simple objects of political control’, it seems clear that ordinary people had little sense of concepts such as ‘nation’ and ‘state’, and did not see them as entities to which they belonged, and for whose sakes they should be prepared to sacrifice themselves.

Instilling the populace with such sentiments and making all feel as though they shared in a common fate or future so as to make them willingly participate in military activities was a priority of the Meiji government. That the realization of those aims required the expansion of popular rights was suggested by intellectuals such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, who remarked in his popular work,

An encouragement of learning, that ‘Persons without the spirit of personal independence will not have deep concern for their country’.

Itagaki Taisuke (1837-1919), the politician and popular rights advocate, also expressed similar ideas. Itagaki had led the military-enforced mission to abolish Aizu domain in 1868. Aizu had been a Bakufu stronghold, and after coming to power, the Meiji regime punished the defiance of Aizu domain officials by completely doing away with their domain. Only the Aizu military

See also Tanaka Akira 田中彰, Kindai tennōsei he no michinari 『近代天皇制への道程』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 1979), p. 3.
51 Tōyama Shigeki 遠山茂樹, Meiji ishin 『明治維新』(東京: 岩波書店, 1995), pp. 74-75.
classes expressed strong opposition to this measure, and Itagaki was shocked by the disinterest of the remainder of the populace. In a speech delivered in Mie prefecture in 1893, he spoke of how that experience had made him realize that because they enjoyed lesser rights, the lower classes held no interest in sharing the burdens of the upper classes. In the words of Hashikawa Bunzō, ‘To instil the populace with loyalty towards the state, it occurred to him that it was above all necessary to eliminate status distinctions and extend popular rights. In this way, the issue of loyalty came to be bound to the formation of equal citizens.’ The fact that the experiments with peasant and ‘outcast’ status soldiers in Chōshū domain had just recently demonstrated that granting rights could bring people to join their interests to those of the domain, and potentially the state, perhaps also helped these notions to spread, given that Chōshū men and their policies were prominent in the new Meiji army regime (with former Satsuma men prominent in the naval regime).66

The Meiji government began by putting an end to most status-based privileges. The regime extended popular rights by granting commoners the right to bear family names, to ride horses, to intermarry with the aristocracy, and so on.

54 Itagaki was a court nobleman, a member of the early Council of State, and later a noted liberal who was in and out of the government for much of the Meiji years. The above story is related in Sakai Hajime 梶井一, ‘Meiji ishiin no katei de minshū ha dō kawattenokara’ 明治維新の過程で民衆はどう変わったのか, in Sasaki Ryūji (ed.) 佐々木隆勝編, Sōten Nihon no rekishi, vol. 6 『争点日本の歴史 第 6 巻』(東京:新人物往来社, 1991), pp. 46-47. The domain was the central structure with which bushi status people identified; Itagaki’s surprise at the lack of popular interest in Aizu’s demise came from his assumption that sentimental attachment to one’s domain was a universal sentiment.


56 Chōshū peasants and ‘outcasts’ strongly identified their futures with the fate of the domain and ‘fought with tenacity and even ferocity’ because ‘if they failed, neither the Bakufu victors nor the highly placed Chōshū conservatives would have shown much compassion.’ Marius B. Jansen, ‘The Meiji Restoration’, in Marius B. Jansen (ed.), The Cambridge history of Japan, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 346. The state desired to arouse in the population generally this kind of personal identification of their future with the fate of Japan. See also Kobayashi, Chōshū han, pp. 149-150.
However, many such new rights had little practical impact on day-to-day life, and these measures failed to stimulate mass gratitude and devotion towards the government. On the contrary, during the early-Meiji years, many peasants felt that they had been the primary losers in the social changes of their times. Although the government had decreed that the people should be equal, a social hierarchy of nobles, former military, and commoners persisted. Moreover, the government afforded nobles and the former military classes various forms of economic assistance, in stark contrast to the situation of peasants, whose tax burden remained just as onerous as it had been under the Bakufu. The lack of improvement in their social and economic situation, combined with the elevation of ‘outcasts’ to their own status, caused many peasants to feel that they ‘had been demoted to the lowest class’. There was considerable and widespread popular hostility towards the state.

The Meiji rulers intensified popular dissatisfaction by introducing three new ‘national’ duties that they presented as counterbalancing the newly granted popular rights: taxpaying, (fee-paying) education, and military service for men. Most people saw their new rights to be inconsiderable and their new duties to be excessive. The Conscription Act that the regime announced late in 1872 (implemented in 1873) was especially unpopular. The military classes disliked

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57 Attempting to arouse popular support and stimulate anti-Bakufu sentiment, imperial forces suggested during the Boshin war that after establishing a new regime, they would halve taxes and the emperor would lighten popular burdens. Aoki Koji 青木晃二, *Meiji nōmin sōjō no nenpōteki kenkyu* 『明治農民騒乱の年次的研究』 (東京: 新生社, 1967), pp. 15-16. While that was indeed the case for a very small part of the population, most received no such consideration.

58 Ōe Shinobu 大江志乃夫, *Chōheisei* 『徴兵制』 (東京: 岩波書店, 1981), p. 65. Hostility was also invited by official measures stigmatising everyday behaviour such as mixed bathing, top knots, and urinating in public.

59 Some people took extreme measures to avoid being drafted. One newspaper reported in 1874 that a Niigata man had become engaged to a girl of six years in order to avoid the draft. This attempt was rejected by the village headman. Happily, on being drafted, he failed the physical examination. Tōkyō Nichi Nichi Shinbun 『東京日々新聞』, 26 October 1874, in Suzuki Köichi (ed.) 鈴木考一編, *Nyūsu de ou Meiji Nihon hakkatsu* 『ニュースで追う明治日本発掘』 (東
this new policy because it signalled a definite end to their formerly privileged status. Peasants disliked it because military service required the absence of youthful and productive labourers from their families and communities for three years, and they detested the army because it was often the main agent involved in suppressing popular uprisings. People devoted considerable time and effort to avoid being drafted, and due to at first undemanding exemption provisions, perhaps eighty percent of youths managed to avoid serving in the military during the early-Meiji period.

In the declaration that accompanied the Imperial Edict on Conscription of November 1872, the government had announced, ‘you are all ordinary people of the realm, and must contribute to the country in the same fashion’. Like rights, duties were to be evenly distributed among the population. But as the fact that draft avoidance was rife indicated, this was not a popular notion; the government needed to find means more powerful than simple legal equality to achieve its aim of arousing a popular national sentiment that would bring people to participate enthusiastically in the military.

See Norman, Soldier and peasant, p. 49.

‘Ketsuzei bōdō’ ‘血税暴動’, in Kida Junichirō (ed.) 紀田順一郎編, Bakumatsu Meiji fūzoku itsuwa jiten 『幕末明治風俗逸話事典』(東京: 東京堂, 1993), pp. 405-6. Among those who were initially exempt were those standing less than 154.5 centimetres tall, those of feeble body, those employed in ministries and prefectural offices, naval and army students, medical and veterinary school students, medical students, teachers, criminals, household heads and their heirs, only sons, adopted children, those who had siblings already in the standing army, those who paid 270 yen in lieu of service, and of course all women. Assumed illnesses, marriages and adoptions of convenience, rapid household divisions and the like were rife. In 1876, out of 296,000 potential recruits, 53,000 were called to examination, and of them, only 18,000 were actually called up. See Matsu Shōichi 松尾章一, Kindai tennōsei kokka to minshū / Ajia, jōkan 『近代天皇制国家と民衆．アジア 上巻』(東京: 法政大学出版局, 1997), p. 46. In English, see ‘Conscription system and regulations’, 1873, in Lu, Sources, pp. 46-47.

The principal resource that the authorities drew upon to foster mass loyalty and promote national integration was the monarch, Mutsuhito. Aiming to cement their authority over the populace, government officials represented him as a major deity who was the rightful ruler of Japan, and to whom all owed their loyalty and submission. This campaign was by no means assured of easy success. As elites of the time complained, the masses of the late 1860s and 1870s ‘know there is a Bakufu, but not that there is an emperor’. To make people aware of Mutsuhito’s existence and of their indebtedness to him, government officials sent him on endless public tours around the country (gyōkō 行幸, junkō 巡幸), and publicized royal ties with figures of popular religious worship. Lessening their emphasis on the claim that the monarch descended in a direct line from Jinmu (神武), who was reputedly the first emperor of Japan (an assertion frequently made in 1867), they began stressing that Mutsuhito was descended directly from the sun goddess Amaterasu, who was at the heart of popular Ise Shrine religious practices. They claimed that the emperor therefore ranked above the also powerful and popular Inari deity, and that he was consequently the proper object of mass adoration and worship.

The ruling elites directed their campaign to turn the emperor into the object of popular worship at soldiers especially. In addition to the broader

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campaign aimed at imbuing the populace with national spirit and making them aware that their fate was directly connected to that of the state, ‘it was stressed that the emperor and the military had a special relationship, and efforts were made to make soldiers feel honoured by their proximity to him’. To give concrete foundation to the notion that he personally commanded the military, the emperor attended numerous military parades and exercises from the early 1870s. The emperor’s association with the military was reinforced by his frequent appearances in Western military costume on public occasions and in photographs. Such images underpinned representations of the military as ‘the emperor’s military’ (tennō no guntai 天皇の軍隊). The 1883 ‘Imperial Rescript to the Army and Navy’ emphasized this notion by having the emperor directly address soldiers. ‘If Our country fails to stand high in the opinion of other nations, We desire you to share in Our sorrow. If it rises with honor, We will enjoy the fruits of it with you’... Whatever actual and potential conscripts felt about these descriptions of their relationship with the sovereign, in attempting to foster a population that would dutifully engage in military service, officials cracked down harder and harder on draft avoidance. The authorities continually tightened conscription

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68. Watanabe describes a range of imperial troop reviews. Watanabe Ikujirō 渡辺幾治郎, Meiji tennō to gunji 『明治天皇と軍事』 (東京: 千倉書房, 1938), pp. 60-66.


regulations during the late 1870s and the 1880s, leading eventually to almost universal male military service in 1889.71

They also invested great effort into creating a more patriotically minded population. Arguably the most significant measure in this respect was the Imperial Rescript on Education, promulgated by the emperor in 1890. This text detailed the characteristics of model Japanese subjects, who were to unite as one in times of need and give of their all for the sake of country and forefathers.

'Should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.'72 Principals constantly recited this text at school assemblies; it was the core element in the government campaign to create a state in which 'army and people were unified by the logic that good soldiers were good people.'73 School education spread these ideas among the young, who often thereafter transmitted them to their parents.

The state represented national service to be a duty that expressed loyalty and fidelity to the emperor, and also as an act whose performance brought

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71 The deficit of soldiers forced authorities to revise exemption provisions. Fraudulent avoidance was made a crime in 1873; regulations were tightened in 1875; household division by those under twenty years of age was forbidden in 1878; from 1879, those who were detected draft-dodging automatically went to the head of the queue; from 1883, fraudulent draft-dodging was punished with between one and twelve months imprisonment and a fine of between three and thirty yen. See Katō Yōko 加藤洋子, Chōheisei to kindai Nihon 1868-1945 『征兵制と近代日本 1868-1945』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 1996), pp. 90, 102. Further, the duration of service was extended, exemptions made into deferrals, and paid exemptions abolished. In 1889, deferrals were abolished, and attempted avoidance was met with immediate conscription. Despite such measures, the rate of avoidance is estimated to have gone at a countrywide level from 3.58 percent in 1880 to 6.9 percent in 1883, 6.47 percent in 1886, and 9.97 percent in 1889. See Emura Eiichi and Nakamura Masanori (eds.) 江村栄一・中村政則編, Nihon minshū no rekishi, vol. 6 『日本民衆の歴史 第6巻』(東京: 三省堂, 1974), p. 215.

72 'Imperial Rescript on Education', 1890, in Lu, Sources, pp. 70-71.

honour to one’s household and to one’s village. Such teachings ultimately created a situation in which ‘the ultimate virtue of Japanese nationals was to become a soldier of the emperor and to die for the emperor’s sake.’

As we shall see below, the population at large first manifested some of the symptoms of this nationalizing campaign during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. But before considering the usual consequence of constructing a national military, which is of course the fighting of wars, it is necessary first to examine the situation of ‘new commoners’ in the Meiji years, focusing on their relationship with the military.

‘New commoner’ patriotic potential

The Japanese state suggested to the populace that by engaging in military service and fulfilling their duty to the emperor, they could acquire honour and renown for themselves and their communities. It represented military service to be a noble and selfless activity, and indicated that to be killed in battle would be an ultimate demonstration of national virtue. To ‘new commoners’ and other marginalized members of society, such discourse suggested that military service might provide a means to counteract social prejudices.

In the case of ‘new commoners’, we must also consider the fact that many demonstrated a strong attachment to the figure of the monarch. During their campaign to take power, forces aligned with the emperor had attempted to garner popular support by portraying the emperor to be a ‘liberatory ruler’.


76 See Hirota Masaki ひろたまさき, ‘Bunmei kaika to zairai shiso’ 『文明開化と在来思想』, in Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai and Nihonshi Kenkyūkai (eds.) 歴史学研究会・日本史研究会編, Kōza
the vast majority of people, this was an inconsequential image, as there was no reality attached to it. In contrast, many ‘new commoners’ felt that the emperor had indeed been instrumental in bringing about their emancipation.

‘New commoner’ communities greeted news of their elevation to commoner status with great joy. They expressed their resulting sense of obligation to the state in campaigns to reform their former lifestyles, as well as through voluntary participation in public works projects. Such gratitude was not precisely to the government so much as to the emperor, whom they considered to have been instrumental in according the boon of emancipation. Presumably, this was because in explaining the abolition decree, officials had indicated that it was an expression of the imperial will. Over the longer term, ‘new commoners’ articulated a sense of being beholden to the emperor through acts involving the worship of imperial paraphernalia. In Shiga prefecture, people constructed shrines dedicated to the Meiji emperor, and well into the twentieth century, many ‘buraku’ residents continued to display portraits of the Meiji emperor or the imperial family in their homes.


77 On ‘outcast’ celebrations, see, for example, ‘Eta domo heimin dōyō ni narukoto’ ‘僕多共平民同様に成事’, and ‘Watanabe mura taiko deru koto’ ‘渡辺村太鼓出る事’, Kinrai nendaiki 『近来年代記』, 9/1871, in Tennō / kōzoku, p. 380.

78 Kyoto ‘new commoners’ set about road works on a particularly bad stretch of highway, and provided one thousand labourers for other public works, for example, ‘Senmin hōon’ ‘賤民報恩’, Kyōto Shinbun 『京都新聞』, 8/1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 261.

79 In Himeji, a prefectural declaration of October 1871 made it clear that they had been rendered into ‘imperial subjects’ (kōkoku jinmin 皇国人民), while the Matsuyama authorities indicated that the decree emanated from the court. See Tennō / kōzoku, pp. 373-374, 375-376. See also Okayama ken kokuyu 岡山県告諭, 1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 411, as well as Haga Noboru 芳賀隆, Minshū gainen no rekishi teki hensen 『民衆概念の歴史的変遷』 (東京: 雄山閣, 1984), pp. 253-6, 321.

80 Given that emperor worship became a fairly popular practice, obviously it is difficult to claim that ‘buraku’ attitudes differed significantly from those held by the rest of the population.

81 Shiga Ken Burakushi Kenkyūkai (ed.) 滋賀県部落史研究会編, Shiga no burakushi, vol. 2 『滋賀の部落史 第2巻』 (大津: 滋賀県同和事業促進協議会, 1974), pp. 233-234. Late in the twentieth century, Morooka Sukeyuki remarked, ‘recently, [young activists] problematized the
houses displayed photographs of the emperor’, while the Asahi Newspaper reported in 1882 that ‘the residents of Watanabe village in Nishinari district have determined to construct a [...] shrine (yōhaisha 遥拝社) to the Jinmu emperor [...] and will endeavour to make an annual pilgrimage to Ise shrine and the [Jinmu] emperor’s grave.’ These phenomena hint that considerable numbers of ‘new commoners’ felt a sense of gratitude and indebtedness towards the monarch, and so in theory constituted a pool of potentially enthusiastic recruits for the ‘emperor’s military’.

Given a lack of resources, I cannot say whether ‘new commoners’ took to military service or not during the 1870s and 1880s. One can speculate that avoidance was common, as it was among the entire population. The media reported occasionally on cases of draft avoidance. There was also a remarkable incident in 1877, when a ‘new commoner’ youth declined to present himself for military service.

An Osaka newspaper reported on the case of two Shimane prefecture brothers, Eikichi and his younger brother Tokichi. They lived in a small community on the fringes of Hamada city. Attaining the age of 20, Tokichi had received his call-up papers. But as the commencement of his stipulated service period approached, his elder brother forewarned city authorities that Tokichi...

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82 Sakai, ‘Meiji Ishin’, p. 48. While such imperial portraits had been around since the early 1870s, the best-known photograph, commonly known today as the goshinei (御真影, or goshashin 御肖真), was taken in 1888, and the Education Ministry began distributing copies to public schools in 1889. Sakai is presumably referring to around this period and later. These photographs were the visual accompaniment to the Meiji Constitution and Imperial Rescript on Education. See Taki Kōji 多木浩二, Tennō no sakuzō 『天皇の肖像』(東京: 岩波書店, 1988), p. 199.
83 Asahi Shinbun 『朝日新聞』, 14 October 1882, in KBSS: 3, p. 213.
84 See, for example, ‘Heisotsu no yubikiri’ 「兵卒の指揮」, Asahi Shinbun 『朝日新聞』, 2 October 1892, in KNBS: 6, p. 305.
would not be presenting himself to the military. ‘The appellations of eta and hinin were abolished after Restoration [...] and we were given the rights of ordinary commoners. But the people of the city still [...] denigrate and shun us’. Consequently, Eikichi announced, Tokichi would decline to undertake his military duties.

This refusal evidently caused consternation among local officials. First, the city ward head visited the brothers in an attempt to convince Tokichi to join up. Failing in that mission, he accompanied Tokichi to the Hamada city hall, where prefectural officials spoke to him. In the end, Eikichi suggested that if the local headman were to pay them a personal visit, perhaps Tokichi would change his mind. As a result, reported the Ōsaka Nippō in the summer of 1877, the local headman had eaten and drunk at the brothers’ home. Demonstrating the enlightened and civilized nature of the local ‘new commoners’, the report made mention that one of their fellows had composed a few poems. Presumably, Tokichi thereafter presented himself to the military authorities.

These two brothers clearly conceived of their relationship with the state as being of a contractual nature. They were thankful that the government had introduced legal equality. But as they had not yet been able to enjoy the rights that they thought should flow on from that measure, they required the local authorities to take concrete steps to improve their circumstances. Only then would they meet their side of the bargain.

As for the officials, they did not necessarily visit the two brothers and eat with them because they disapproved of prejudices against ‘new commoners’.

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85 During the preceding years in Hamada, ‘new commoners’ had been excluded from public baths and schools, for example. See Hamada Shinbun 『浜田新聞』, April 1875, in KBSS: 2, pp. 377, 378.
86  Ōsaka Nippō 『大阪日報』, 4 July 1877, in KBSS: 2, pp. 379-380.
Rather, a recent government directive that required local officials to convince reluctant participants of their duty to present themselves for service was probably decisive. Greatly concerned by the prevalence of draft avoidance, the government had declared earlier in 1877 that 'military service is of national importance, it is a duty that the people must undertake'. Because so many felt otherwise and diligently avoided being drafted, military personnel were in short supply. In consequence, the directive stated, officials were to explain to the people why they had to serve in the military. And this is exactly what local officials were doing in the above case.

**Army life**

Once ‘new commoners’ entered into the army, the authorities were rather less considerate of issues involving prejudice and denigration. In fact, abetted by local officials, the military authorities would actively discriminate against them. Although the authorities did not exclude them from the draft, they marked ‘new commoner’ recruits out for special treatment.

The basic procedure for conscription was that town and village officials would draw up a list of all men turning twenty between the previous December and the coming November. They would send these lists to the local district office. District officials would then pass them on to the local conscription

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87 See Tōkyō Nichi Nichi Shinbun『東京日々新聞』, 3 February 1877, in Suzuki, Nyūsu de ou, p. 197.
88 Institutionalized discrimination within the military undermines suggestions that the Japanese military was run without heed of social status, as suggested by Narusawa Akira (成沢光, Kindai Nihon no shakai chitsujo—rekishiteki kigen wo motomete 近代日本の社会秩序—歴史的起源を求めて) (東京: 岩波書店, 1997), pp. 104-105; or that 'the military moulded “human beings” who were independent of traditional modes of production and social status', as suggested by Karatani Kōjin (Origins of modern Japanese literature, translated and edited by Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 131). Concerns with status and origins are obviously separate from the fact that the military, after conscripting relatively uneducated rural youths, taught them to read and write, to lead a regimented life wearing western costume, and to labour and consume. See Taki, Tennō no sakucō, p. 231.
authorities, who would conduct physical examinations from April to August, grading people into five categories. People from the top two categories were placed into a lottery, and those whose names were drawn had to present themselves for service the coming December.89

During this process, local officials transmitted information about each recruit to the military, including if he was a ‘buraku’ resident.90 While I have (unsurprisingly) seen no documentary examples of this system, its existence is borne out by other sources. In his memoirs, Kōno Teien (1852-1934), a Buddhist priest and the leader of ‘buraku’ reform and improvement projects in a Yamaguchi prefecture district described how in 1915, a young conscript from his village came home on leave and informed him that military officials held secret documents detailing which soldiers were ‘buraku’ residents. Those records were being used to stop them from being promoted. Kōno firstly confirmed that this was the case with the local military commander, who explained to him that local officials were responsible for annotating documents in such a discriminatory manner. Upon protesting to local officials, however, they showed him sample copies of secret ‘conscription investigation directives’ distributed by the military.

90 That officials identified ‘new commoners’ by special markers on their civil registration records is an often-heard claim. But few—less than one percent, according to some sources—of registry records appear to have identified people’s former status. See Nadamoto Masahisa 濱本昌久, ‘“Shinheimin” to iu koshō’ ‘『新平民』という呼称’, Koperu 『コペル』, vol. 137, May 1989. See also Tsuji Michiko and Nakajima Chieko 辻ミチ子・中島智枝子, ‘Meiji Ishin to Kyōto no buraku’ 『明治維新と京都の部落』, in KNBS: 2, pp. 22-23. At least during the Meiji period, local officials, especially in rural areas, would presumably have remembered or known the former status of people in their community and been able to transmit such information. Opinions on this vary, of course. Ogushi Natumi suggests that some records were indeed marked. 大貫夏身, ‘Edo no hisabetsu / Tōkyō no hisabetsu’ 「江戸の被差別・東京の被差別」, in Ogi Shinzō (ed.) 小木新造総, Edo Tōkyō wo yomu 『江戸東京を読む』(東京: 筆磨書房, 1991), pp. 233-234. The extent of this practice cannot currently be confirmed, but in any case, Herman Ooms’ comment that ‘all former kawata’ were registered as ‘new citizens’ (shin shinmin 新市民?) is utterly mistaken. Herman Ooms, Tokugawa village practice: class, status, power, law (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 246.
Those directives required district officials to inform military officials of ‘burakumin’ recruits.91

It is likely that such a concern with identifying ‘buraku’ conscripts stemmed from the desire of military authorities to prevent them from becoming officers. To understand why the military authorities should wish to prevent them from attaining positions of command in the army and navy, it is instructive to review the dominant military philosophy of the late-Meiji period.

The primary concern of the military authorities was the complete subordination of troops to the commands of superior officers. During the making of the early-Meiji military, officials had seen the merit-based promotion of officers heedless of wider social considerations give rise to disarray within the ranks. The early-Meiji army was initially comprised of former bushi, who were re-organized so as to resemble a Western-style military. Due to the vagaries of promotion, ‘significant disorder resulted from the fact that people’s military rank did not necessarily correspond to their social rank. Disciplinary problems arose when former ashigaru officers were ranked above immensely wealthy former samurai [...]. Furthermore, when peasants and townspeople entered into the midst of these former military class soldiers as a result of conscription, friction [...] arose between them.92 To deal with these issues, the military authorities developed strict regulations requiring recruits to display absolute subservience to the orders of superiors. And more significantly, the government, driven by

91 Kōno Teien 河野節園, ‘Sabetsu no yami wo nüte’ 「差別の闇を縫ふて」, Yūwa jigyō kenkyū 『新和事業研究』, vol. 2, 1928, in Sekai Bunko (ed.) 世界文庫編, Yūwa undō ronsō 『新和運動論叢』(東京: 世界文庫, 1972), p. 69. In similar fashion, Sekimoto Shingorō, a Kyoto prefecture army conscript, also reported that the military used such a system. ‘The army had already received documents detailing my particulars’. In other words, they had been notified that he was a ‘burakumin’ resident. ‘That determined my rank’, he stated. Sekimoto Shingorō 関本新五郎, ‘Guntai de no sabetsu / kikigaki ‘軍隊での差別・聞き書き’, 1911, in KNBS: 7, p. 180.
92 Fujiwara, ‘Tōsuiken’, pp. 480-481. See also Matsushita, Meiji gunseishi ron, jōkan, p. 403. ‘Ashigaru’ was the lowest of the many bushi ranks.
Katsura Taro (1847-1913), introduced a one-year volunteer system of military service in 1889.

A former Choshu man who had studied military science in Germany, Katsura was one of the architects of Japan's modern army. Deeply involved in the military reforms of the mid-Meiji period, he later went on to become prime minister. His one-year system provided for the award of officer rank to all volunteer recruits from wealthy and educated families. Katsura thereby aimed to avoid the disciplinary disorder that might arise 'if a poor tenant farmer who is usually despised gains the honoured position of an [...] army lieutenant, and a [...] entrepreneur or landowner became a private'.

His actions were related to the fact that the previous year, the government had acted to make sure of the loyalty of regional elites by allowing them to strengthen their grip upon local affairs through the new regional administration system (while according local assemblies expanded rights, this system limited the right to stand and vote for those assemblies to the wealthy, and thus gave them considerable scope to maintain and expand their influence). Katsura targeted the sons of these local elites, granting them the chance to hold the reins in the military as their fathers did in regional society, such that local and military order would enter into a mutually reinforcing relation. Clearly, to be successful, this policy required the authorities to prevent people of low social status from

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93 The lack of army prestige among educated and wealthy youths saw them tend to avoid conscription; this was seen to be an important problem. See Richard J. Smithurst, *A social basis for pre-war Japanese militarism. The army and the rural community* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 7.
attaining military ranks where they would command people of higher social standing.\textsuperscript{96}

The translation of this principle into practice was visible, for example, in the fact that the authorities tended to give ‘buraku’ residents the most unesteemed jobs, in the transport corps, or as horse tenders and cooks and so forth.\textsuperscript{97} Kimura Kyōtarō, a liberation activist of the Taishō period, recalled that ‘upon joining up, we’d usually be assigned to the transport corps, or even if we joined the infantry, we’d be made to engage in boot repairs [...]. However much we strived and succeeded, we were treated discriminatorily and could not become non-commissioned officers, let alone officers’.\textsuperscript{98}

Extant records suggest that once their ‘origins’ were known, ‘buraku’ residents were insulted and denigrated by their fellow soldiers without effective means of countering that situation.\textsuperscript{99} Official lack of concern with the situation of

\textsuperscript{96} The principal much later exceptions were Korean volunteer recruits in the Japanese imperial army, who were permitted entry into officer school and promoted according to merit in mixed units. But that probably had much to do with the fact that these volunteers were of upper-class origin. Wakatsuki Yasuo 若槻泰雄, \textit{Kankoku / Chōsen to Nihonjin 『韓国・朝鮮と日本人』} (東京: 原書房, 1989), pp. 30-31.

\textsuperscript{97} A disproportionate number were allocated to these kinds of functions (shichō yusotsu 軍重輸卒). See Kubo Norio 久保井規夫, \textit{Sensō to sabetsu to Nihon minshū no rekishi 『戦争と差別と日本民衆の歴史』} (東京: 明石書店, 1998), p. 31. Reflecting the negative perception of these roles, one Hyogo prefecture town agreement stated that departing and returning soldiers should be given financial gifts, but whereas the departure gift for ordinary soldiers was one yen, those of this corps were only given half that amount. ‘Hyōgo ken Kawabe gun Itan chō gunjin taigū kiyaku「兵庫県川辺郡伊丹町軍人待遇規約」, 10 December 1887, in Yamanaka, \textit{Nihon kindai kokka}, pp. 181-182.

\textsuperscript{98} Quoted in Ōe, \textit{Chōheisei}, pp. 114-115. Kimura’s statement needs qualification. The number of ‘buraku’ draftees who became transport corps members was disproportionate, but they did not necessarily constitute the majority. Okamoto Wataru’s survey of Wakayama prefecture ‘buraku’ residents records that out of 166 serving soldiers, 92 were ordinary infantrymen, 32 engaged in transport and other such menial duties, with 16 in the slightly more prestigious artillery. Okamoto Wataru (ed.) 岡本弥織, Kure Ayatoshi commentary 呉文俊解說, ‘Wakayama ken shinheimin chōsa「和歌山県新平民調査」, \textit{Shakai 『社会』}, vol. 3, no’s 3 and 4, March and April 1901, in NSSS: 25, p. 484.

\textsuperscript{99} Incidentally, it was related in ‘buraku’ communities that officers who did little to deal with constant discrimination within the ranks feared that the weapons of ‘buraku’ recruits might be pointed at them in the heat of battle, and so placed ‘buraku’ soldiers in front-line units with high death rates. Akisada Yoshikazu 秋定嘉和, \textit{Kindai Nihon jinken no ayumi—shu toshite buraku}
the rank and file, so long as they obeyed orders, meant that victimization was generally rife.\textsuperscript{100} And of those soldiers who found themselves targeted by discrimination within the ranks, ‘the sensible passed their days in tears, and those who could not bear it deserted and hid themselves in backwaters […]’. Their numbers increased steadily every year.\textsuperscript{101}

Two main responses developed out of this situation. The most readily available strategy against discrimination in the military was to avoid being conscripted. It was probably the widespread adoption of this strategy that caused commentators to write that ‘buraku’ residents had a strong dislike of military service.\textsuperscript{102} The other strategy was to assert the right as imperial subjects to serve the emperor according to their merits. This was not always successful. In 1908, two (‘buraku’) politicians, one from the National Assembly, the other from the Osaka City Assembly, attempted to protest directly to the military authorities against the existence of institutional barriers to promotion within the military, as

\textsuperscript{100} See Matsushita, Meiji gunseishi ron, gekan, p. 662.
\textsuperscript{101} Kimura is quoted in Ōe, Chōheisei, pp. 114-115. He was not born until 1902, and his memories of experiences were recalled by Yoshimura Sōsui in 1914, when he wrote of learning for the first time upon entering the army that there were different grades among the ‘emperor’s loyal subjects’. See Yoshimura Sōsui 吉村耕水, ‘Kenkai yoteki’ 「砲海余瀬」, Kōmyō 『公明』, vol. 5, October 1914, in \textit{KBSS}: 6, pp. 433-434. Okamoto Wataru recalled in 1921 that when he did his military service during the late 1890s, ‘I was one of those who would cower in a corner of the dormitory during the dead of the night, weeping into the sleeves of my uniform.’ Okamoto 向本弥, \textit{Tokushū buraku no kaihō} 『特殊部落の解放』(東京: 警醒社, 1921), p. 37. Miyoshi Iheiji (1873-1969), an activist of the Taishō and Shōwa periods recalled that when he was in the army during the 1890s, ‘discrimination was openly practised’, and its targets ‘had to bear it, ceaselessly swallowing silent tears’. Miyoshi Iheiji 三次伊平次, ‘Guntai to sabetsu jiken’ 「軍隊と差別事件」, \textit{Yuwa jihō} 『幼稚時報』, 1928, in Sekai Bunko, Yuwa undō ronshō, p. 193. Still others found matters so unbearable that they took their own lives. See ‘Hiretsu naru fuwa denō’ 「卸るなる附和電団」, \textit{Heimin Shinbun} 『平民新聞』, 29 May 1904, in \textit{KBSS}: 4, p. 266.
well as against the fact that they were excluded from officer training academies. Formally dressed and in their own private carriage, they called on the military headquarters adjoining Osaka castle. But the military authorities refused to meet with the pair on the grounds that they were non-military personnel who moreover engaged in ‘lowly’ occupations.103

A reportedly successful case of a serving soldier protesting against discrimination within the ranks provides a clearer illustration of this strategy. In a 1921 book, the activist Okamoto Wataru reproduced a letter that a Second Class Private in a unit of the Thirty-Seventh Infantry Battalion had sent to him in November of 1919. Insulted by another soldier, this man had retaliated with physical force and been taken before a superior officer. Required to explain his actions, he responded, ‘In the emperor's imperial edict, He required us to aid Him.104 We too are His servants.’ He pointed out that the other soldier had no right to denigrate him. ‘He is an insolent sinner, thinking of people spoken of in the Imperial Edict as less than human. Thus I chastised him’... Their commander, according to this epistle, was so moved that ‘spilling tears, he grasped my hands’, and granted the soldier leave to transfer to another division. ‘Now I undertake my military duties with a light heart, and if there were to be some affair of state requiring that I fulfil my duties as a servant of the emperor, I will show that burakumin are model servants...’105 Echoing the language of imperial rescripts and proclamations, this soldier claimed a chance to serve his emperor and country according to his merits, and thereby to demonstrate his patriotism.

103 ‘Sengyōsha no shitei / Amakawa daikatsu seraru’ [貿業者の子弟・天川大喝せる], Asahi Shinbun [朝日新聞], 6 September 1908, in KBSS: 4, p. 66.
104 The imperial edict of the 10 October 1904 was the first occasion that the emperor called upon the aid and sacrifices of the masses in battle. Ōe Shinobu 大江志乃夫, Nichiro sensō to Nihon guntai 『日露戦争と日本軍隊』 (東京: 立風書房, 1987), pp. 150-152.
105 Okamoto, Tokushu buraku, pp. 38-39. This story seems rather unlikely, but cannot be verified or falsified.
He wanted to prove that he, and ‘burakumin’ more generally, were worthy imperial subjects whom it was highly improper to subject to discrimination. And not just soldiers, but ‘buraku’ residents more widely, also expressed this sentiment.

**Struggles over billeting**

Although it restricted military service proper to healthy young males, the Meiji government imposed some military-related duties on the rest of the population. Notably, the army allocated military billets to civilian homes during regional military exercises. The government had represented military service to be an act that was not merely a national obligation, but also an honour for the individual involved and more widely for his family and community. In the same way, it spread the idea that by providing military billets with moral and material support, the masses should display their patriotic qualities and thereby acquire honour for themselves.¹⁰⁶

In reality, receiving billets was an honour that many poorer people could do without. Amano Takurō observes that in some villages in Hiroshima, ‘residents treated military billets coldly, or refused them altogether’, at least unless the army offered them money. The honour that such allocations brought was insufficient to cover the associated economic burden. All the same, ‘buraku’ residents conducted a number of campaigns seeking to have billets allocated to their communities. When billets were allocated, ‘buraku’ residents’ homes were commonly excluded, and so these campaigns were presumably motivated by the prospect of acquiring the honour and social cachet associated with hosting

soldiers of the imperial army, and in so doing, to dispel social prejudices against them.  

Of course, there was the further consideration that not hosting billets allowed others the opportunity to remark on their patriotic deficiencies. Gifu prefecture ‘buraku’ residents have handed down a story about billet allocation during the Russo-Japanese war that illustrates this principle. ‘Holding that it would be an honour to have [soldiers] stay, the villagers all [...] competed to have soldiers assigned to them’. This particular village had a teacher ‘full of loyalty to the emperor and love of country’. A lone ‘buraku’ child attended the school of this patriotic teacher, and his peers tormented him because his kind was to have no billets. Condemned as patriotically lacking, he sought to avoid going to school. His parents asked the village military association if even just a single soldier could not be assigned to the ‘buraku’ community, ‘for the child’s sake’. The village headman added them to the emergency list to cover for cases where sickness or death might prevent someone from fulfilling their duties. The parents could thus tell their child that they were in the running. Needless to say, the story ends with the family receiving no billets. As this story suggests, people would undertake overtly ‘patriotic’ acts not only to gain honour and status, but also so as to avoid attracting the derision of others. It was presumably for such a combination of reasons that ‘buraku’ residents campaigned to have billets allocated to their communities.


Open and violent protests against the non-allocation of billets erupted in some areas. ‘Buraku’ villagers in Osaka were omitted from the list of billet providers in 1904. This so incensed residents that they attacked the village headman thought to be responsible. Similar events took place in Osaka’s Nishinari district in 1908. In Kyoto, the *Hinode* newspaper reported in 1909 that local ‘buraku’ residents had been angered by the fact that they had not received any military billets. Declaring that ‘it is insufferable that we alone should be excluded’, ever since then they had ‘used all possible means to disrupt village life’.

Military regulations were sufficient to nullify protests by serving soldiers within the army. In comparison, civilian protests against the non-allocation of billets had a considerable success rate. Kōno Teien, the Buddhist priest mentioned above, recounted one successful case. Kōno apparently began engaging in reform measures after experiencing discrimination within the local school system. In 1901, on the occasion of local infantry manoeuvres, his community alone did not receive billets. Residents were deeply disappointed, and Kōno set out to investigate. Local officials told him that the decision was a military one that they were not competent to question. Kōno thereupon visited the local military headquarters. Army representatives informed him that it was an order from superior officers, and beyond their competence too. Kōno then went to the district military command armed with a petition signed by ‘buraku’

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110 Satono Ryūhei 里野龍平, ‘“Hinmin buraku” kara “tokushu buraku” he’ 『『貧民部落』から『特殊部落』へ』, *Osaka no burakushi tōshin* 『大阪の部落史通信』, December 2000.
112 A brief description of Kōno’s life can be found in ‘Tsudo gun Kume mura aza [...] Seinen Kōdōkai’ 都濃郡久米村字[...]青年同志会], March 1910, in *KBSS*: 5, pp. 300-302.
residents, and threatened to protest to the regimental headquarters if the district commander ignored their complaints. The situation was rectified the following day.114

Similar action also bore fruit in Shiga prefecture. In 1911, a priest writing for the Honganji temple-affiliated Chūgai Nippō reported on a ‘buraku’ village whose residents had not been allocated any billets. ‘They protested against the unfairness of this to the district head, asking why did he not allocate any billets to them when their children performed military service too’. The district head apparently responded that it was because their village was dirty. In response, the ‘buraku’ residents stated that they would buy new bedding and so on for their billets if only they could be allocated some soldiers. Subsequently, the military liaison officer allocated some of his best troops to this community, and everything went well to the delight of ‘buraku’ residents.115 Having attempted to justify their original act of discrimination with a pretext that was easily overcome, officials had no other option than to assent to buraku demands.

Such events occurred in Okayama prefecture too. In November 1916, residents of a ‘buraku’ community asked why officials had not allocated them any billets. Village officials blamed district officials for this ‘oversight’. While it is unclear who was directly responsible, ‘as a result of protests, 130 officers and their subordinates stayed in the community’.116 The journal Kōdō also touched upon this incident in 1917, reporting that, ‘The treatment of billeted soldiers by

114 Kōno, ‘Sabetsu no yami’, pp. 67-68.
115 ‘Tokushu buraku no dendō kaizen ha Honganji no sekimu nari (continued)’ ‘特殊部落の伝道改善は本願寺の策に転じ（続）’, Chūgai Nippō 『中外日報』, 27 June 1911, in KBSS: 5, p. 43.
these *burakumin* was extremely polite and kind, and it is said that the soldiers were well-satisfied with the warm welcome they received.117

The efficacy of community protests against military discrimination was probably due to the state aims that underpinned the billeting system. In all likelihood, the government had not commenced billeting soldiers in civilian homes simply to economize on food and accommodation costs. Rather, by making the population familiar with the army, the state aimed to reinforce the image of imperial soldiers as rare and privileged beings, build popular respect for and devotion to them, and encourage the future development of dedicated soldiers. From this perspective, marginalizing substantial parts of the population and becoming embroiled in large-scale public protests over systematic discrimination in the military was highly undesirable. Furthermore, it was difficult for officials openly to ignore factors such as legal equality when dealing with civilians. These factors encouraged military authorities to respond positively to *buraku* demands for billets.

Clearly, the community protests against military-related discrimination referred to above did not spring from philosophical disapproval of warfare and armies, but rather from a desire, at least on the surface of things, to serve their country. Even in sensational cases where *buraku* residents refused to serve in the army, the root causes were the lack of opportunities for advancement, and the lack of official action against concrete expressions of discrimination. This point was clearly demonstrated in a celebrated case of 1915, when residents of a *buraku* community in Yamaguchi prefecture proclaimed that they would henceforth cease all involvement in the military.

As Ōe Taku (Tenya) noted, systematic discrimination by the army had caused this incident.\textsuperscript{118} The events followed Kōno Teien’s above-mentioned discovery of discriminatory military guidelines regarding the identification of ‘buraku’ conscripts. Kōno subsequently set about organizing a major protest. ‘Since our rights are violated, we cannot fulfil our duties’, read a document he presented to local authorities. This was to say that local ‘buraku’ residents would decline any further participation in military service. This declaration caused a local crisis, and brought district officials to meet hurriedly with military officials. In response, the local military commander and subordinate officers visited the ‘buraku’ community, presumably to make amends, and promised that discriminatory documentation would be destroyed forthwith, and that ‘buraku’ residents too, would henceforth be considered for promotion by the local military authorities.\textsuperscript{119}

**Communal performances of patriotism**

Popular patriotic initiatives were not limited to becoming soldiers or hosting billets. On a local level, ‘buraku’ residents identified themselves as thorough-going patriots during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, taking the initiative in holding flag-raising ceremonies, conducting memorial rites and mass prayer meetings, collecting funds for the war effort, buying war bonds, and so on.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} Ōe Tenya 大江天也, ‘Kyōjidai no senminzoku kenkyū’ 「旧時代の賤民族研究」, 1916, in Saiga Hiroyoshi 難葉裕, Ōe Tenya denki 『大江天也伝記』(東京: 大江太出版, 1925), pp. 775-776.

\textsuperscript{119} Kōno, ‘Sabetsu no yami’, p. 69. In 1910, Kōno had increased his official clout in the area by receiving an official decoration from the Interior Ministry for his services to ‘buraku’ reform.

\textsuperscript{120} The first major military venture of the Meiji government was fought against Chinese forces over the control of the Korean peninsula. In victory, Japan obtained control over Taiwan, expanded its influence over the Korean peninsula, and took three billion yen in reparations from
To take merely a few examples, residents of Kyoto’s Yanagihara community celebrated the succession of Japanese victories in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 with tea ceremonies, fireworks, music, and other festivities.\textsuperscript{121} The mayor accorded returned soldiers a public reception, and over 120 people fêted them in the town hall.\textsuperscript{122}

Residents of Osaka’s Nishihama town (the former Watanabe village) did likewise. The declaration of war with China saw victory flags raised at the local temple,\textsuperscript{123} and the media printed reports on donations by ‘buraku’ residents to the war effort.\textsuperscript{124} In 1895, just after the end of the war, priests from East Honganji temple in Kyoto came to conduct a memorial assembly (Chōikai 弔慰会) for the war dead and their relatives. Military representatives, prefectural officials and politicians, local district officials and representatives attended this ceremony.\textsuperscript{125}

The head of Kyoto’s Honganji temple, as well as over three hundred other participants, attended another such ceremony in Nishihama at the end of June.\textsuperscript{126}

‘Buraku’ communities held such ceremonies more frequently and on an even grander scale during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. Taking the case

the Chinese. The war effort is estimated to have cost two billion yen and over 13,000 deaths, mainly from disease, out of 240,000 soldiers. The affair was roughly ‘profitable’ for the Japanese government. The Russo-Japanese war that was again fought over control of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria (north-eastern China) was a more massive affair. Over 870,000 soldiers were despatched, with almost ten percent dying, and almost 150,000 wounded. As these figures suggest, its impact on life within Japan was immense, in terms of taxation, exposure to military themes and thinking, as well as the prolonged absence of a considerable proportion of male youths. See Matsuo, 

\textsuperscript{121} ‘Yanagiharachô no shukushõkai’ 『柳原町の祝捷会』, 

\textit{Hinode Shinbun} 『日出新聞』, 5 February 1895, in \textit{KNBS} : 6, p. 148.

\textsuperscript{122} ‘Kii gun Yanagiharachô zaigō gunjinkai’ 『紀伊郡柳原町在郷軍人会』, 

\textit{Asahi Shinbun} 『朝日新聞』, 2 December 1901, in \textit{KNBS} : 6, p. 160.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Asahi Shinbun} 『朝日新聞』, 19 September 1894, in \textit{KBSS} : 4, p. 199.

\textsuperscript{124} See the \textit{Osaka Asahi}’s series of ‘bidan’ (美談) or ‘beautiful tales’ on monetary contributions by poor ‘buraku’ residents: ‘Atsushi ke’ 『篠志家』, ‘Kitoku naru saïkenkin’ 『奇特なる再献金』; and ‘Shushei no furumai’ 『殊勝の授與』, respectively in \textit{Osaka Asahi Shinbun} 『大阪朝日新聞』, 14 and 19 August and 19 September 1894, in \textit{KBSS} : 4, pp. 198-199.

\textsuperscript{125} ‘Shussei senshisha chôikai’ 『出征戦死者弔慰会』, 

\textit{Asahi Shinbun} 『朝日新聞』, 5 June 1895, in \textit{KBSS} : 4, pp. 199-200.

\textsuperscript{126} ‘Tsuichôkai’ 『追弔会』, 

\textit{Asahi Shinbun} 『朝日新聞』, 26 June 1895, in \textit{KBSS} : 4, p. 200.
of Kyoto’s Yanagihara again, eminent locals formed associations to aid those who had relatives serving in the military and who found themselves in economic difficulties. One body provided daily rice to adolescents (future soldiers) as well as to others deemed incapable of supporting themselves.\textsuperscript{127} This association conducted a ceremony in 1904 at the local Saikōji temple that drew over 2,000 spectators—nearly half of Yanagihara’s population—who reportedly gave liberal donations to aid the families of military men.\textsuperscript{128}

Local politicians and dignitaries hosted victory celebrations and other functions to welcome those soldiers who returned alive.\textsuperscript{129} In Yanagihara early in 1906, the district assembly head and the district head hosted elaborate victory celebrations, and they presented returned local soldiers with a letter of gratitude and a variety of gifts. Local officials organized festivities, and ‘the attending lines of pupils were given red and white rice cakes. Around the Town Hall, the spirit of the occasion was expressed by the raising of the flag and illuminations.’\textsuperscript{130} As Kobayashi Takehiro has noted, the Russo-Japanese war ‘was strongly supported by the vast majority of citizens’, and Yanagihara was ‘a place of heightened martial spirit’.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{127} ‘Yanagiharachō hōkō gikai’ ‘柳原町奉公義会’, Asahi Shinbun 『朝日新聞』, 10 March 1904, in KNBS: 6, 163.

\textsuperscript{128} Asahi Shinbun 『朝日新聞』, 13 March 1904, in KNBS: 6, p. 164. Such fervour was reported approvingly elsewhere. See ‘Yanagiharachō no hōkō’ ‘柳原町の奉公’, Chūgai Nippō 『中外日報』, 15 March 1904, in KNBS: 6, p. 165.

\textsuperscript{129} ‘Kii gun senbyō shisha tsuichō hōkai’ ‘紀伊郡戦死者追弔法会’, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 12 March 1906, in KNBS: 6, pp. 170-171.


One of the more significant functions of such communal prayers for and celebrations of war victories was that they caused people to feel that they belonged to a united Japanese community, and that they all shared an interest in that community’s fate.\textsuperscript{132} Also, from the perspective of marginalized people such as ‘buraku’ residents, events like the official funeral ceremonies that commemorated soldiers killed in battle were important in that they provided a concrete foundation for the notion that one could gain higher social status through efforts in war.

Public funerals were one of the ways in which the state appropriated and used the deaths of individuals in battle to foster national sentiment.\textsuperscript{133} Further attempting to reinforce popular loyalty, the state would also celebrate all those who acquired the status of national heroes by being killed in battle for the country’s sake at Yasukuni Shrine.\textsuperscript{134} But at the same time, official funeral ceremonies were also among the few occasions when factors such as social origins or ‘status’ counted for relatively little on a local level.

The government directed district officials to attend military funerals, and strongly encouraged town and village officials to do so as well.\textsuperscript{135} By dying in battle, the socially marginal could force local dignitaries and officials to attend

\textsuperscript{132} See Takashi Fujitani, \textit{Splendid monarchy: power and pageantry in modern Japan} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 214. The establishment of patriotic festivals and ceremonies for ‘educating and ennobling hearts’ was of course what Rousseau had recommended to the Polish government around a century earlier. See George L. Mosse, \textit{The nationalization of the masses. Political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich} (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975), pp. 73-74.

\textsuperscript{133} This official treatment of the funerals of the war dead was an ultimate national appropriation of private lives and deaths. They were turned into national heroes without means of complaining about it. Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, ‘Senjō no kikō / shōgen no ryōiki’ 「戦場の記憶・証言の領域」, \textit{Gendai Shisō 『現代思想』}, vol. 23, no. 1, January 1995, pp. 204-205.

\textsuperscript{134} Yasukuni Shrine is the state memorial institution that in principle houses the spirits of all those considered to have died in battle serving their country.

their funerals and read out eulogies for them. Patriotic service, so long as one died performing it, could in fact bring about public recognition.\(^{136}\)

Ubukata Toshirō succinctly described this phenomenon in his account of a funeral ceremony for a man killed in battle during the Sino-Japanese war. ‘We primary school pupils, along with the town mayor and district heads and local notables, had the honour of attending the funeral of a soldier killed in the war. That soldier was the child of a poor house from a poor town on the city outskirts, so people wore the expression “why are we at the funeral of this man”.\(^{137}\) But in front of his remains, the district head and many others read eulogies’...\(^{138}\) An Ehime prefecture survey on ‘buraku’ residents that was presented to the Interior Ministry in 1907 provides a further example. The authors reported that the public funeral ceremonies for the heroic spirits of the war dead, including ‘buraku’ residents and others as both objects and subjects of that worship, were conducted amicably, and gave cause for celebration.\(^{139}\) A certain amount of substance underlay the notion that patriotic endeavours could improve one’s social circumstances.

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\(^{136}\) Temple records from a small ‘buraku’ village on Kyoto’s Tango peninsula reveal that one young man from this village who went to the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 was killed in action in September. His bones were returned to the community in November of that year, and his funeral was held on the eighth of December. The village head conducted the rites, but also present were the district head, the local representative of the Kyoto Education Association, the head of the Patriotic Women’s Association’s local branch, and representatives from all the district, town, and village heads, and numerous priests. See Ishioka Masami (ed.) 石岡正己編, ‘Jōzenji eida kiroku ‘浄善寺永代記録’ , 1911, in KNBS: 9, pp. 419-421.

\(^{137}\) This phrase tends to suggest that the man may have been a ‘buraku’ resident.


\(^{139}\) Shinheimin no jōtai, jō「新平民の狀態 上」, *Kainan Shinbun* 『海南新聞』, 11 June 1907, in KBSS: 4, pp. 286-287.
The uses of national service

Speaking of the Japanese population more generally, people all around the country repeated the kinds of performances of patriotism briefly described above in the cases of two ‘buraku’ communities. During the Sino-Japanese war, the string of Japanese successes that telegraph reports transmitted around the country via the police and post aroused mass enthusiasm for the war effort. The whole affair was massively commercialised: war drawings sold well, ‘sabres and military caps were arrayed in front of stores, and war games became popular amongst children’. Authors, poets, playwrights and songwriters too, joined in the productive surge, with the result that ‘great quantities of military novels, war poetry, military anthems, and war theatre flooded the literary world’. 142 ‘People’s tastes were suddenly military-oriented, and a sense of respect and dedication towards soldiers became increasingly strong.’

Such events recurrent during the Russo-Japanese war. The literary world caught ‘war fever’ again in 1904-1905. 144 People held mass parades and processions and prayer ceremonies for victory, as the media constantly reported on and represented the battlefield and constructed military heroes. 145 And as a

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141 Matsuo, Kindai tennōsei kokka, pp. 227-228.


144 Nishida Masaru 西田勝, ‘Nichiro sensō to bungaku’ 「日露戦争と文学」, in Odagiri (ed.), Kōza Nihon kindai bungakushi, pp. 141-142.

145 Cameramen from the world over, including Japanese media companies such as Hakubunkan, went to cover this Russo-Japanese war. See Iwasaki Asahi 岩崎旭, Eiga shi 『映画史』 (東京: 東洋経済新報社, 1961), pp. 325-326. ‘The desire to see the true situation of this war of national survival caused people to flock to film screenings’, transforming film from novelty to a part of
result of these two wars, ‘In a context dominated by patriotic fervour, by means of various ceremonies and festivities, the Imperial Rescript on Education, the Imperial Portrait, the Rising Sun flag and the Kimigayo anthem became things that the nation was familiar with’. In short, these two wars caused ‘every possible kind of national symbol to permeate the Japanese territory’.146

In light of the massive nationalizing influence that these two wars had on people throughout the Japanese islands, clearly it is impossible to suggest that performances of patriotism by ‘buraku’ communities were exceptional in themselves. But their subsequent usage of wartime actions is noteworthy. For ‘buraku’ residents turned narratives recounting past engagement in national service by members of their communities into weapons against contemporary expressions of prejudice.

Making use of the formula of the Meiji constitution, which ‘placed at least as much emphasis on the duties of the subject as on the privileges which flowed from membership in the national family’,147 ‘buraku’ activists attacked those who, ignoring the fact that they performed their duties, discriminated against them. Sasano Otokichi deployed this argument in his 1902 treatise ‘Social oppression’. Sasano argued that ‘new commoners’ paid their taxes, engaged in useful economic production, and performed military service. The society that discriminated against them was thus massively at fault for refusing to

recognize that they fulfilled ‘the duties of national citizens’ (kokumin taru no ginu 国民たるの義務) and therefore were incontestably meritorious ‘imperial subjects’ (teikoku no shinmin 帝国の臣民) who possessed a right to equitable and considerate treatment.\(^{148}\)

Writers presented wartime actions to be especially significant in this respect. Wada Kenji argued that ‘like old commoners [kyūmin 旧民], they fulfil tax obligations and engage in national service.’ During the Russo-Japanese war, many ‘died honourably in battle serving the emperor in the advance on Port Arthur’ (Ryojun 旅順, Chinese Lushun), and won decorations for conspicuous valour.\(^{149}\) Consequently, Wada argued, discrimination was completely unjustified. The well-known ‘buraku’ activist and writer Maeda Sanyū also noted in identical fashion that ‘new commoners’ had ‘demonstrated the qualities of the Yamato race before our enemies’, and that their call for concrete equality was consequently the ‘just assertion of unquestionable rights.’\(^{150}\)

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\(^{148}\) Sasano Otokichi 竹野音吉, *Shakai no yokuatsu 「社会の抑圧」*, May 1902, in *KBS*: 4, pp. 438-443. According to his own account, Sasano was born in Enokuma village, Ōita prefecture, Kyushu, in 1864. Aside from running a pawnshop, he was involved in local ‘buraka’ reform activities, as well as local community activities such as fire-fighting, improving rice strains, and the Red Cross.

\(^{149}\) Wada Kenji 和田健児, ‘Shimminron 「新民論」, *Kainan Shinbun 『海南新聞』*, 6 January 1907, in *SHYH*, pp. 84-86. It was evidently known in Ehime prefecture that local ‘burakumin’ had been decorated during the Russo-Japanese war. The authors of an Ehime prefecture report wrote that ‘displaying their military prowess […]', not a few distinguished themselves and received Golden Kite decorations'. See ‘Shinheimin no jötai, ņo 「新平民の状態 上」, *Kainan Shinbun 『海南新聞』*, 11 June 1907, in *KBS*: 4, pp. 286-287. Golden Kite decorations (Kinkō kunshō 金鷲勲章) were awarded for military valour, and were doubly precious in that they also carried a yearly pension, ranging between 1500 yen for first class (limited to high ranking officers), 200 yen for sixth class—the highest award a private could be awarded, and 100 yen for the lowest seventh class, which was what most privates were awarded. Ōe suggests that, ‘for soldiers of poor tenant farmer origin, the fact that their deaths could be exchanged for such a considerable sum, which would be paid to surviving relatives, was a great attraction, together with the prospect of media attention, associated honour, and public funeral.’ The difficulty was to ‘die the right way’. See Ōe Shinobu 大江志乃夫, *Nichiro sensō no gunjishiteki kenkyū 『日露戦争の軍史的研究』* (東京: 岩波書店, 1976), pp. 296-297.

Youth Association for Social Improvement in March 1910. He argued that denigration of the descendants of former 'eta' status people was unjustified because 'on the occasions of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars [...] no different from ordinary people, they came forth in those times of national need'.

Nagasawa Norihiko, the secretary of a Yamaguchi prefecture local improvement organization, likewise criticized the fact that, 'Today, the same as other ordinary people, they engage in military service and pay tax, but ordinary people continue to denigrate and exclude them.'

The limits of national service

Since the early 1870s, the Meiji regime had constantly stressed to the people how important it was that they fulfilled their national duties. 'Buraku' elites and intellectuals had repeated that call: fulfilling one's duties conscientiously would bring one honour and renown. In response, the hope of improving their everyday circumstances led many to involve themselves in various 'patriotic' activities. But those activities did not suffice to bring about

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152 Nagasawa Norihiko 長沢則彦, 'Tokushu buraku no kanka to jichi' 「特殊部類の感化と自治」, Keisei 『警世』, January 1910, in KBSS: 5, pp. 298-300.
153 This was practiced widely by marginalized Japanese subjects. As Shinya says, 'those who experienced discrimination had to become more Japanese than the Japanese'. Shinya Kyō 新谷行, Ainu minzoku teikōshi—Ainu kyōwakoku he no raidō 『アイヌ民族抵抗史—アイヌ共和国への殆動』(東京: 角川書店, 1974), p. 201. Such phenomena were sometimes seized upon by the media, as in the case of the Ainu soldier Kitakaze Isokichi (Ainu people became liable for conscription in 1895). Distinguishing himself in combat during the Russo-Japanese war, journalists represented him to be a model of diligence and application who was almost a 'real Yamato' national. See Rikugun Chū Saken Sei 陸軍中尉左助, 'Kō shichihikyū no Ainujin Kitakaze Isokichi 「功七級のアイヌ人北風磯吉」, Chuugaku Sekai 『中学世界』, January 1907, 19, Kimura Ki (ed.) 木村毅編, Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 97. Meiji sensō bungaku shū 『明治文学全集 第 97 巻 明治戰爭文學集』(東京: 筑摩書房, 1969), pp. 331-332. Similarly, Okinawan elites welcomed the application of the Conscription Act to Okinawa in 1898 because they thought that Okinawans, 'by undertaking their national duties, would be able to become one with other imperial subjects'. See 'Chōhei kihi' 「義知忌避」, in Okinawa Ken (ed.) 沖縄県編, Okinawa kenshi, bekkkan, Okinawa kindai shi jiten 『沖縄県史 別巻 沖縄近代史事典』(東京:
lasting improvement in their lives, especially given that much of the population had engaged in similar activities and made the same sacrifices. The end result was perhaps a certain degree of disenchantment with the notion that enjoyment of one’s rights would follow on from the performance of one’s duties.

Such a process is described in ‘Lute Song’, an immensely popular fictional work that was not only made into a successful play, but which also inspired the production and sale of merchandise including Lute Song post-cards, tobacco cases, coin holders, and so on. Written by the popular author Ōkura Tōrō, the Osaka Asahi newspaper serialized this work during the Russo-Japanese war after it won the newspaper’s literary fiction award.

The story follows the lives of a ‘buraku’ youth named Sanzō and his sister Satono. Sanzō is a veteran of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895. Then, he had gone to war with only his sister to see him off at the station. In 1904, with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, he is called up again. But during the intervening years, his fortuitous meeting with the beautiful noblewoman Kikue has led to a quite unprecedented friendship. And this time, Sanzō’s departure is a rather grand occasion, with not just his sister, but also Kikue and sundry retainers and servants seeing him off at the station. This ending to the story’s first volume suggests that whatever one’s social standing, it is a glorious thing to serve one’s country in battle. Finishing on a romantic high note with Sanzō receiving a
jewelled ring from Kikue, readers are given the impression that should he survive, his reward for engagement in battle will be to wed her.  

This story thus echoes one of the core promises that national states make to their loyal subjects, that dedication to the nation shall be duly rewarded. Kikue embodies a beautiful ‘Japan’ who properly recognizes and values Sanzō’s patriotism. The work as a whole posits ‘war’ as a site that ‘instantly does away with minor domestic contradictions such as inequality and poverty.’

Okura finished the first volume before the war began; by the time the Osaka Asahi newspaper published it, he was fighting in China. To some degree, his story presumably reflected personal hopes of winning personal glory in battle. But in the rather less celebrated sequel of 1910, the author did away with those romantic martial visions. Upon re-entering the army, Sanzō finds himself targeted by discrimination. Although he wins decorations and acquires military glory of a kind, he is invalided home, and his return is an anticlimax. While his sister’s marriage has been resuscitated, Kikue disappears from the story, and Sanzō ends up alone. The pre-war promises of later renown and reward are gone.

Obviously, Okura’s aim in writing this sequel was not to disillusion ‘buraku’ residents about military service. One can speculate that the very different tones of the first and second volumes reflect his personal

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disenchantment with dreams of military glory. Many shared such a sense of
disappointment in the period following the Russo-Japanese war. Soldiers
generally found that battlefield exploits counted for little in the aftermath of war.
More generally, public disappointment over the diplomatic settlements of these
two wars and the economic hardships of the post-war period eroded the popular
unity born of national crisis and the mass enthusiasm generated by successive
military victories.

In the case of ‘buraku’ residents, it turned out that public performances of
patriotic acts improved their concrete social circumstances little, if at all. This
growing sense of deception with regard to the covenant of duties in return for
rights was perhaps in some instances channelled into emigration. Presumably, it
also reinforced the tide of lifestyle reform and improvement campaigns which, in
the case of ‘buraku’ communities, aimed to deal with the problem of
discrimination by helping residents ‘catch up’ to the everyday living standards of
the ordinary mainstream Japanese.
Chapter six

The making of modern urban order

Visions of the modern city

Due to their desire to achieve parity with the advanced states of the time, the rulers of late-nineteenth century Japan saw pressing aesthetic and practical reasons to 'civilize' the national territory. Naturally, early legislation-driven endeavours were insufficient; the concrete realization of Japanese modernity also called for the mobilization of the masses. Beginning with an account of urban policy and its effects on the lower social strata through the 1880s and 1890s, this chapter goes on to reconstruct from available evidence an overview of some popular initiatives aimed at gaining respectability for local districts and their residents. A range of social, cultural and economic pressures encouraged people to support these initiatives, which in practice served to realise the visions that the ruling strata had for the urban landscape.
From the last years of the Edo period, members of the Japanese intelligentsia set out to discover the 'West' in ever-increasing numbers. During their travels, many were fascinated by the new technologies they encountered, and they also expressed considerable interest in such things as drainage, refuse and water supply systems, and in how clean the city streets were. Kume Kunitake (1839-1931), a member of Iwakura Tomomi’s 1871 mission to Europe and the United States of America, was one such interested observer. Writing about Western cities, Kume suggested that the quality and cleanliness of streets were indicators both of the degree of a country’s power and civilization, and of the level of popular morality and industry.2

In Japan, such notions about state power and civilization being reflected in urban scenes soon translated into practical action. Government officials implemented measures to improve transport networks, introduce street lighting, create better drainage, secure safe water supplies, and reduce the incidence of crime, fire and disease. With regard to popular morality and industry, officials took steps to change people’s urban lifestyles, notably by means of new regulations that policed such behaviour as public urination and mixed bathing, as well as through the introduction of certain standards of cleanliness.3

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1 See Ono Yoshirō 小野芳朗, ‘Seiketsu’ no kindai 『清潔の近代』 (東京: 講談社, 1997), pp. 51-58.
2 Ishii Fusao 石井扶桑雄, ‘Kume Kunitake no bunmeikan kara mita Purōisen’ 『久米邦武の文明観から見たプロイセン』, in Nishikawa Nagao and Matsumiya Hideharu (eds.) 西川長夫. 松宮秀治編, ‘Betō kairan jikki’ wo yomu—1870 nendai no sekai to Nihon 『米欧回覧実記』を読む—1870年代の世界と日本』 (京都: 法律文化社, 1995), pp. 152-154. The Iwakura Mission departed with the aim of revising the ‘unequal treaties’ of 1858. But seeing that the disparity between the West and Japan was greater than anticipated, members re-focused on the acquisition of knowledge that would help improve Japan’s international position.
3 Officials began reforming popular living practices by means of the Minor Crimes and Misdemeanors Act. See Narita Ryūichi 成田龍一, ‘Kindai toshi to minshū 『近代都市と民衆』, in Narita Ryūichi (ed.) 成田龍一編, Kindai Nihon no kiseki, vol. 9, Toshi to minshū 『近代日本の軌跡 第9巻 都市と民衆』 (東京: 吉川弘文館, 1993), p. 14. This was introduced in Tokyo in 1872, regionally in 1873, and in Osaka in 1876. See ‘Ishiki kaii jōrei’, 「違式詰違条令」, in
In addition to such measures, the authorities also acted to modify the spatial distribution of poor people. Nakagawa Kiyoshi has observed that the Meiji-period urban population was ‘low-class’ as a whole.\textsuperscript{4} Perceiving that the instantaneous transformation of urban areas and their residents into modern cities inhabited by civilized urbanites was unlikely, early-Meiji officials also attempted to create specific zones of wealth and respectability. That is, they endeavoured to bring an end to the existing situation, in which prosperous merchants and former military class people resided in close proximity to poorer people such as beggars, artisans, day labourers, builders, factory workers, and others.\textsuperscript{5}

In Tokyo, for example, Mochida Nobuki has indicated that as many former bushi quit the city during the late 1860s and 1870s, their past residential zones became run-down. But life in the ‘low town’ (shitamachi 下町) areas continued largely as before, with bustling stores fronting the main streets, and rear tenements (uradana 裏店, or uranagaya 裏長屋) crowding the back alleys.\textsuperscript{6}

Writing in 1888, Edward Morse likewise noted that ‘in the cities the quarters for the wealthier classes are not so sharply defined as with us [...]. In nearly all the

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In November 1880, Matsuda Michiyuki (1839-1889), then governor of Tokyo, found fault with the fact that wealthy and destitute people lived in close proximity to each other. He argued that the city area was excessively large, with poor people living clustered amongst the rich. It was necessary, therefore, to separate the two out. Matsuda proposed the creation of a new ‘central metropolitan area’ (chūō shiku 中央市区) that would comprise the wards of Nihonbashi, Kanda and Kyōbashi. Building regulations and taxation measures could then be used to concentrate respectable people of the property-owning classes in those three wards. The following year, Matsuda was able to take a few steps towards the realization of this plan.

In late January 1881, fire destroyed over two thousand buildings in Kanda ward near the centre of Tokyo, including the Hashimotocho area (橋本町). During the Edo period, members of a religious group known as ‘gannin’ (願人) or ‘gannin bōzu’ (願人坊主), many of whom lived on the proceeds of public religious performances involving dance and song, had resided in Hashimotocho alongside large numbers of travelling traders, pilgrims and others in forty-six ‘doss-houses’ (gureyado グレ宿) run by local gannin leaders. There were

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7 See Edward Morse, *Japanese homes and their surroundings* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1888), p. 5. Morse goes on to remark (pp. 49-50) that poor farm labourers, fishermen, and their urban counterparts usually inhabited shanties and huts that were little more than shelters. Anbo suggests a similar situation prevailed in Kobe during the mid-1880s. See Anbo Norio 安保則夫, ‘Kindai shakai shisutemu to shite kōshū ei’e’ nisō shisha, in KEJS: 3, pp. 482-486.

8 Officially, these were only allowed to accommodate ‘sacred itinerants’. But they ‘in fact admitted nearly anyone who paid the requisite fee’. Gerald Groemer, ‘A short history of the Gannin. Popular religious practices in Tokugawa Japan’, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1 and 2, Spring 2000, pp. 53-55. Groemer also notes (p. 60) the ambiguous legal
eighty-three such gannin-operated establishments in five locations around the city of Edo, each accommodating around ten people. Hashimotochō had been a centre of cheap accommodation.\(^{11}\)

A meeting of Tokyo officials regarding re-development after the fire was hastily convened on the 29\(^{th}\) of January 1881. A study of its minutes reveals that things had not changed significantly during the early-Meiji period. At this forum, Matsuda Michiyuki put forth a proposal to the effect that the Hashimotochō area, inhabited by poor and unemployed people and former gannin, was ‘filthy’ (fuketsu 不潔) and ‘unsightly’ (futeisai 不体裁), not to mention prone to fire. He declared that it ought to be re-developed in a manner that would render it impossible for such people to reside there in future.\(^{12}\)

The aim, in the words of a Tokyo prefecture official named Itō Masanobu, was to rid the city of the ‘doss houses’ (kichinyado 木賃宿\(^{13}\)) sheltering ‘little people’ (shōmin 小民) and, by building ‘regular houses’ (jinjō no kaoku 尋常の家屋) that ‘good people’ (ryōmin 良民) would inhabit, to transform the area and render it a ‘regular town’ (ippan no machinami 一般の町並). As for the former low class residents, the future head of the Mainichi Shinbun, Numa Morikazu

\(^{11}\) See Yoshida Nobuyuki 吉田伸之, ‘Edo no gannin to toshi shakai’ 「江戸の遊人と都市社会」, in Tsukada Takashi et al. (eds.) 塚田孝ほか編, Mibun-teki shūen 『身分的周縁』 (京都 : 部落問題研究所, 1994), 117-121. As Yoshida indicates, each establishment was quite small; many occupied the area of a single tenement dwelling.


\(^{13}\) As the term’s Chinese characters—literally ‘wood-fee-inn’—suggest, these were cheap inns in which one slept communally, cooking one’s own food on a central hearth, whence the kichin or ‘wood fee’.
(1843-1890), declared that laws were necessary to force them to move to the city outskirts, where it was ‘normal for poor people to reside’.14

Noting the Tokyo authorities’ references to the presence of doss-houses, former gannin, and poor people, Yoshida Nobuyuki has concluded that in the early-Meiji period, Hashimotochō was still a point of confluence for travellers, entertainers, labourers and others, and as such, was distinguished by ‘traditional’ popular values and practices. Only because of their desire to create a modern city inhabited by respectable people of means and education were officials able to stigmatise the area as a ‘slum’-type quarter, and to treat its residents in discriminatory fashion.15

On the ostensibly public-spirited and progressive grounds of improving urban order and aesthetics, the assembled Tokyo officials unanimously approved Matsuda’s proposal to buy up Hashimotochō, and they determined to impose stringent new building regulations that would raise construction costs and rents. Temporary dwellings erected after the fire were demolished, and the authorities forced the once-again homeless poor people to move, most of them being forced into cheap accommodation in Asakusa and Shitaya wards.16

14 Itō Masanobu 伊藤正信, and Numa Morikazu 浸間守和, in ‘Tokyo jūgoku rinjikai’, pp. 16-17 and 25-27 respectively.
15 Yoshida Nobuyuki 吉田伸之, ‘Edo no “minshū sekai” to Hashimotochō ikken’ 「江戸の『民衆世界』と橋本町一件」, in Nihon kindai shisō taikei, vol. 19, fukoku <Geppo 17> 『日本近代思想大系 第 19 巻・付録<月報 17>」, August 1990, pp. 5-8. To a degree, Edo-period perceptions of the area overlap with those of the Meiji period. For example, Groemer says that Hashimotochō, as well as other areas with numerous ‘doss-houses’, were seen as ‘haunts of beggars, unlicensed prostitutes, and assorted riff raff that made city administrators nervous’. Groemer, ‘A short history’, p. 53. But that concern about public order differed substantially from the state considerations that are in question here.
Public health

Given the fact that the authorities of other cities began introducing regulations to deal with what they considered similar ‘unsightly’ and ‘filthy’ zones and their inhabitants, we can suggest that such concerns were widely shared by urban officials. It is also significant that, as well as stressing the importance of improving the ‘appearance of the imperial capital’ (teito no taimen 帝都の体面) and preventing future fires, Matsuda Michiyuki had identified ‘hygiene’ (eisei 衛生) as an important concern of government.\(^{17}\)

The physical well-being of the masses had elicited little concern among the ruling classes of the Edo period. However, during the Meiji years, notions of hygiene, and especially of ‘public hygiene’ (kōshū eisei 公衆衛生), achieved official prominence. A physician and bureaucrat by the name of Nagayo Sensai (1838-1902) played a leading role in this transformation. During the last years of the Edo period, Nagayo had trained in Dutch medical studies in Nagasaki under Matsumoto Jun, the future head of the Navy’s medical department. In 1871, relying on collegial relationships formed in Nagasaki with luminaries of the new government such as Kido Takayoshi and Itō Hirobumi, and with the assistance of the Chōshū powerbroker Inoue Kaoru, Nagayo managed to attach himself to the Iwakura Mission to Europe and the United States of America.

Arriving in Germany in the spring of 1872, Nagayo acquired a keen interest in the ‘public hygiene’ (Gesundheitspflege) movement of the time. He took careful note of how the government acted to maintain and improve public health through measures as varied as the draining of swamps, the planned disposal of sewage, the provision of clean water, public education about hygiene,

and the use of police and neighbourhood surveillance to enforce the thoroughgoing application of hygienic principles in everyday life. Upon returning to Japan in 1873, Nagayo was initially attached to the medical section of the Education Ministry, and then in 1875, he became the inaugural head of the Hygiene Bureau (Eisei Kyoku 衛生局) of the Interior Ministry. He continued thereafter to promote the rise of public hygiene as a policy issue in a number of official and semi-official capacities.

To a considerable degree, the hold that public hygiene acquired over government policy-making was entwined with a practical concern about contagious diseases, and in particular with the cholera epidemics of the late-Edo and Meiji periods. Between the years 1856 and 1858, some 300,000 deaths were attributed to cholera, as were over 8,000 in Nagasaki in 1877, and over 105,000 across the country in 1879. Cholera was to cause over 33,000 deaths again in 1882, and almost 110,000 in 1886. Further epidemics occurred in 1890 and 1895. State concern with improving human resources and presenting a civilized face to the West demanded effective action to put an end to such recurrent crises, causing the role of public hygiene authorities to expand constantly.

A consultative body, the Central Hygiene Association (Chūō Eiseikai 中央衛生会), was set up under the auspices of the Interior Ministry in 1879. This body’s charter provided for the dispatch of surveyors to gather information on diverse matters pertaining to population health, including geography, soil,

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19 For a brief biography of Nagayo, see Suzuki Yōgo 鈴木要吾, Rangaku zensei jidai to Ranchū no shōgai 『蘭学全盛時代と蘭殖の生涯』(東京：東京医事新誌局, 1933), pp. 209-211.
transport, climate, customs, occupation, housing and drainage. In 1883, to promote the spread of public awareness about hygiene (as a Central Hygiene Association submission to the Interior Ministry had stated, the practice of hygiene had to be made a part of everyday life, rather than being encouraged and enforced solely during epidemics), Nagayo became involved in the establishment of the semi-official Greater Japan Private Hygiene Association (Dai Nihon Shiritsu Eiseikai 大日本私立衛生会).

In the eyes of public hygiene specialists such as Nagayo, urban poor people and their lifestyles constituted major impediments to the improvement of the health of the population as a whole, and thus to Japan’s progress and development. In a statement on housing published in April 1886, Nagayo criticized the fact that Japanese people commonly ate, slept and lived in the same room. He deemed that practice a ‘remnant barbaric custom’ (banzoku no ifū 蛮俗の遺風) that contributed to the retarded physical development of Japanese people. From the perspective of public hygiene (kōshū eisei 公衆衛生), he declared, there was a great need for more Western-style rental accommodation ‘suitable for people of middle class and above’ (chūtō ijō 中等以上). The construction of such housing would help eliminate the innumerable huts and shanties blighting the urban scene.

These concerns with hygiene and housing surfaced in the Interior Ministry’s ‘Tenement House Construction Regulations’ (Nagaya Kenchiku

Kisoku (長屋建築規則) of May 1886. Initially applicable to the cities of Osaka, Sakai and Nara, these regulations covered building size and type, and required police approval of plans for new constructions (Article 2), as well as police inspections and approval before anyone took up residence in completed buildings (Article 3). They required each row of tenements (mune 棟) to consist of not more than five dwellings (ko 戸), with almost a metre of space between each row (Article 4), at least two windows per dwelling (Article 6), ventilation ducts (Article 12), and at least 30 centimetres of ground clearance (Article 13). Furthermore, they accorded police the power to relocate people whose 'state of residence is extremely unhygienic and seen to be harmful to public hygiene' (kōshū no eisei 公衆の衛生, Article 17). The appendix further provided for the renovation or demolition of existing structures that officials deemed hygienically unsatisfactory.²⁵

These measures were presumably intended to improve the concrete living conditions and health of the masses. Ventilation ducts, windows and increased ground clearance and so forth would clearly have made tenement housing healthier and more pleasant to inhabit. However, these regulations raised building costs, in all likelihood with a corresponding rise in rents. Furthermore, the provisions of article seventeen and the appendix gave officials unprecedented

²⁴ The Greater Japan Private Hygiene Association called twice on the Tokyo prefectural authorities to apply the regulations in Tokyo, in June of 1886 and again in May of 1887, on the grounds that 'unhealthy buildings' (jukenkō no kaoku 不健康の家屋) existed all over town and, more significantly, in between the residences of the wealthy (fuka gōko 富家豪戸). See Harada Keiichi 原田敬一, '1886 nen no toshi puran—korera, naimushō, bunmei' 「1886年の都市プランーコレラ・内務省・文明」, in Zenkoku Burakushi Kenkyū Kōryūkai (ed.) 全国部落史研究交流会編, Burakushi Kenkyū, vol. 2, Kindai no toshi no arikata to buraku mondai 『近世の都市のあり方と部落問題』 (大阪: 解放出版社, 1998), pp. 45, 53-56. But the Tokyo authorities appear to have preferred to rely upon hygiene regulations until 1907, when tenement house-related legislation was introduced. See Keishichō Rei, no. 3, Nagaya kōzō seigen ni kansuru ken, 警視庁令 第3号 長屋構造に関する件, January 1907, in KBSS: 4, pp. 55-56.

power to expel urban dwellers from their homes on grounds of hygiene, and to order the renovation or demolition of existing tenements. In one Osaka working class district alone, these regulations were used to justify the demolition of almost 450 structures.\textsuperscript{26} In the short-term, their effect was to reduce the quantity of accommodation suitable for people of the lower economic strata who resided in the affected metropolitan areas.

\textbf{Assembling the poor}

As well as introducing construction and hygiene laws that affected the standard and quantity of accommodation available to poor people in metropolitan centres, urban authorities around the country also took action to concentrate the poorest people in specific areas. The eminent Meiji bureaucrat Ōura Kanetake (1850-1918) devised one of the more radical plans of this kind during his time as head of the Osaka police. Alleging that poor people were the cause of the 1886 cholera outbreak, Ōura argued for the relocation of those resident within the four Osaka metropolitan wards to a new planned town in Nishinari district’s Nanba area. He claimed that their expulsion would have the effect of reducing the incidence of crime and disease in the city, and thus delight the ‘good people’ (\textit{ryōmin} 良民) of the metropolis.\textsuperscript{27}

As a result of vociferous opposition from Osaka landlords, as well as concerted complaints about the prospect of ‘criminally-minded’ and ‘disease-
ridden' poor people moving into their area from Nishinari residents, Ōura's plan to free the city of the presence of poor people came to nothing. However, government measures targeting doss-houses, where the poorest people commonly lived, tended to have the desired effect of reducing the numbers of poor residents in central urban areas.

In June 1886, the Interior Ministry directed the authorities of all prefectures to implement 'Inn Policing Regulations' (Yadoya Torishimari Kisoku 宿屋取締規則). Acknowledging that different local situations would require varying responses, the ministry offered some general guidelines. No establishment was to admit unaccompanied minors, 'idiots and lunatics', thieves, fraudsters, or people who endangered public morality. There were to be three classes of establishments. Catering to the wealthy, travellers' inns (ryonin yado 旅人宿) were to have total room space of over 25 tsubo, or roughly 82.5 square metres, with not less that 1.5 tsubo, or around five square metres, of floor space per guest. Boarding houses (geshukuya 下宿屋) were to have rents set by the month, and only operate in structures with over 33 square metres of floor space. At the bottom of the scale, doss houses (kichinyado 木質宿) were unaffected by considerations of floor space, but, as article thirty of the regulations stipulated, the authorities of each prefecture were to delimit their operating zones, no doubt selecting appropriate areas from the perspectives of public order and hygiene.

In March 1886, some months before this directive was announced, the Chōya Shinbun observed that in Tokyo, 'grand structures' (kōro 高楼) stood adjacent to 'unsightly decrepit huts' (migurushiki haoku 見苦しき破屋), and

28 See, for example, 'Hinmin ijū gian' 「貧民移住議案」, Chōya Shinbun 『朝野新聞』, 8 September 1886, in KBSS: 3, p. 232.
29 Naimushō 内務省, 'Yadoya torishimari kisoku hyōjun' 「宿屋取締規則標準」, 14 June 1886, in KBSS: 3, pp. 43-44.
reported that the prefectural authorities were moving to concentrate the residents of the latter type of structures, which is to say, poor people, to Honjo, Fukagawa and Senjū. Those were among the locations to which Tokyo doss-house operations were limited in 1889. The Kobe authorities designated a number of doss-house operating zones in March 1887, and the district that was to become popularly known as ‘Shinkawa’ on the city’s eastern fringe became the sole authorized doss-house operating area from June 1892. Osaka prefecture officials implemented regulations in December 1887, which, requiring that doss-houses cease operating within the four Osaka city wards, designated a number of sites adjoining the metropolitan area.

Although people found ways to (partially) circumvent such restrictions, these regulations covering construction, hygiene and lodgings combined with land price and rent increases related to the emergence of an urban middle class to force many poorer people to move from relatively central metropolitan areas into specific more outlying districts. In the Kansai area, there was a pronounced tendency for the poorest people affected by such urban planning legislation to

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34 Doss-house operators could turn their establishments into tenement houses let nightly, but they then had to meet the new tenement house regulations, while residents might pool their resources and share rental accommodation with others.
gravitate towards ‘buraku’ areas on city outskirts. For example, after the Osaka metropolitan government tightened its tenement and doss-house regulations, many low-income people could no longer find suitable accommodation in the four city wards, and moved into ‘buraku’ localities in the Nanba area. Similar trends became apparent in Kobe, and also in Kyoto, as we shall see in more detail below. During the mid-to-late Meiji period, the geographical juxtaposition of what commentators deemed urban and semi-urban ‘buraku’ areas and ‘slum’ locations became a noticeable phenomenon in the Kansai area.

The degree to which people distinguished between ‘buraku’ residents and ‘incomers’ in the areas where so-called ‘slums’ and ‘buraku’ overlaid the same geographical space is unclear. Presumably, both ‘slum’ dwellers and ‘buraku’

36 Harada Keiichi 原田敬一, ‘Kindai shakai to suramu / eisei / toshi’ ‘近代社会とスラム・衛生・都市’, in Asaji Takeshi et al. (eds.) 朝治武ほか編, Dassayōshiki no buraku mondai 『脱常識の部落問題』(京都: かもがわ出版, 1998), p. 190. Harada notes a dramatic decrease in the numbers of accommodation providers in the Osaka metropolitan wards in 1887. He suggests that due to the new floor space requirements, of the 1,200 establishments offering accommodation in February, only 591 travelers ins and 100 boarding houses remained in April; by October, their numbers had further dwindled to 385 travellers’ ins and 103 boarding houses. Many doss houses became tenement houses let by the day. Harada Keiichi 原田敬一, ‘Chian, eisei, hinmin—1886 nen Osaka no “shiku kaisi” ‘「治安・衛生・貧民—1886 年大阪の『市区改正』」, Machikaneyama Ronsō, Shigaku hen 『待兼山論叡 史学篇』, vol. 19, December 1985, pp. 20-21.
37 The situation in Kobe was somewhat exceptional. As noted in chapter one, people were forced from central city districts towards the ‘Shinkawa’ area, which, while not an area inhabited by people of ‘outcast’ status during the Edo period, became considered to be both a ‘slum’ and ‘buraku’ in the late-Meiji period. Nunokawa Hiroshi 布川弘, ‘Kobe “Shinkawa” no seikatsu kōzō ni kansuru nōto’ ‘神戸『新川』の生活構造に関するノート」, in Buraku Mondai Kenkyūjo (ed.) 部落問題研究所編, Kindai Nihon no shakaishiteki bunseki—terūsei ka no buraku mondai 『近代日本の社会的分析—天皇制下の部落問題』(京都：部落問題研究所, 1989), p. 260.
38 Arai has suggested that ‘most of Japan’s slums are juxtaposed on Tokugawa-era discriminated buraku areas’, but clearly he is referring for the most part to locations formerly associated with people of the ‘hinin’ status group. Arai Kōjirō 荒井貞次郎, Kinsei semin shakai no kiso kōzō 『近世貧民社会の基礎構造』(東京：明石書店, 1987), p. 27.
residents were subjected to prejudiced treatment by others related to mainstream perceptions of poverty as an attribute whose possession correlated directly with such qualities as criminality, immorality, and lack of hygiene, while those who were deemed ‘buraku’ residents were no doubt also subjected to denigration related to perceptions that they were of ‘outcast’ descent.  

But here, I am primarily concerned with the friction between incomers and long-time ‘buraku’ residents that became visible in the wake of the policies discussed above. To consider that phenomenon, I wish to take up the case of a Kyoto community that was known during the Meiji years as Yanagihara.

Early-Meiji Kyoto and Yanagihara

Along with the economic centre of Osaka and the political centre of Edo, Edo-period Kyoto, as the monarch’s home, had been the third of the so-called ‘triumvirate of capitals’ (*santo* 三都). Aside from being the home of the court, with in excess of 300,000 residents, Kyoto had also been a noted manufacturing centre for textile, pottery and other craft products.

Around the country, inter-related processes of political turbulence, economic instability and popular unrest marked the late-Edo and early-Meiji years. Popular unrest was largely a factor of rapid increases in the cost of living, which resulted not just from consecutive bad harvests, but also from the rapid rise in exports subsequent to the opening of Japanese ports under the provisions of the 1858 treaties.  

In the case of Kyoto, of course, the local economy was rocked by the departure of the monarch and sundry hangers-on for Tokyo in the

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autumn of 1868, as their departure is thought to have reduced the Kyoto population by an estimated ten thousand relatively affluent consumers.\footnote{See Yoshida Mitsukuni 吉田光邦, ‘Nishijin to Kiyomizu’「西陣と清水」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.) 京都市編, Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, Koto no kindai 『京都の歴史 第8巻 古都の近代』(東京：学芸書林, 1975), p. 106.} \footnote{Tsuji Michiko 辻美子, ‘Machigumi no kaisei’「町組の改正」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.) 京都市編, Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 7, Ishin no gekidō 『京都の歴史 第7巻 維新の激動』(東京：学芸書林, 1974), p. 498.} The economic situation of the lower economic strata in early-Meiji Kyoto was dire.\footnote{The latter measure was primarily aimed at benefiting the Nishijin weaving industry, which had declined during the latter part of the Edo period due to increased domestic competition, and then been hit by a sharp rise in raw silk exports which caused the cost of its raw materials to skyrocket. See Sugimori Tetsuya 杉森哲也, ‘Kashoku—temadori shokunin no sekai’「下職—手間取職人の世界」, in Yoshida Nobuyuki (ed.) 吉田伸之編, Nihon no kinsei, vol. 9, Toshi no jidai 『日本の近世 第9巻 都市の時代』(東京：中央公論社, 1992), pp. 230-232.} Assisted by special central government budget allocations accorded to help alleviate the projected impact of the court’s departure, the Kyoto city authorities acted to reinvigorate the local economy by means of initiatives including stock raising, and the introduction of waterwheel and sewing machine technology.\footnote{See Tanaka Masato 田中真人, ‘Keizai no hatten’「経済の発展」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.), Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, p. 252; Nishikawa Kōji and Moritani Katsuhisa 西川幸治·森谷健久, ‘Koto no dappi「古都の脱皮」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.), Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, pp. 19-20.} They also commenced local infrastructure projects to improve drainage and transport systems, and began public works projects such as the construction of railroads and an aqueduct from neighboring Shiga prefecture’s Lake Biwa to the city.\footnote{See Yoshida Mitsukuni 吉田光邦, ‘Nishijin to Kiyomizu’「西陣と清水」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.) 京都市編, Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, Koto no kindai 『京都の歴史 第8巻 古都の近代』(東京：学芸書林, 1975), p. 106. See Tsuji Michiko 辻美子, ‘Machigumi no kaisei’「町組の改正」, in Kyōto Shi (ed.) 京都市編, Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 7, Ishin no gekidō 『京都の歴史 第7巻 維新の激動』(東京：学芸書林, 1974), p. 498.} However, prefectural measures did little to reduce the numbers of the city’s poor people, whose ranks were constantly swelled by former peasants, lured by the prospect of a better life or driven off the land by bad harvests and inability to meet tax burdens. Economic recession and inflation following the Seinan war of 1877, and deflationary policies taken to remedy that situation, worsened the plight of the poorer strata in Kyoto (as they did elsewhere). During the mid-1880s, some effects of these economic conditions could be seen in
increases in the number of suicides in the Nijō castle moat, and in the number of people begging on city streets. As with other Japanese cities of the mid-1880s, much of Kyoto’s urban population was probably low class, as suggested by the fact that over 75 percent of people lived in rented accommodation (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owners (front)</th>
<th>Tenants (rear)</th>
<th>Tenants (shared, separate hearths)</th>
<th>Tenants (shared, same hearth)</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>24,106</td>
<td>18,345</td>
<td>3,004</td>
<td>67,180</td>
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<td>35.88%</td>
<td>27.31%</td>
<td>4.47%</td>
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<td>7.53%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Many ‘new commoners’ were among the most economically deprived Kyoto residents during the mid-Meiji years. But with regard to members of this group, and specifically those who had formerly been classed in the pejoratively titled ‘eta’ status group, it should be noted that many first suffered from destitution during the Meiji years.

According to official population figures for 1870, the Kyoto prefecture (yet to include Sonobe) population was 382,049 people in 101,763 households. Of the latter, 2,042 were classed as ‘eta’ status households with 9,176 members. Almost half that number, or around 4,000 people, lived in an

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47 During the Edo period, people came to attribute great importance to house-ownership because that was the main way to ensure that one would have a say in local governance, thus it is likely that all those able to own their own residences did so. Sugimori Tetsuya 杉森哲也, ‘Chō’ 「町」, in Oguchi Yūjirō et al. 大口勇次郎ほか著, Nihon no kinsei 『日本の近世』 (東京: 放送大学教育振興会, 1998), p. 99. An 1886 survey of the four Osaka city wards indicated a similar tenant-owner ratio. See Harada Keichi 原田敬一, ‘Kinsei toshi kara kindai toshi he「近世都市から近代都市へ」, Hisutoria 『ヒストリア』, vol. 130, March 1991, p. 99.
48 Tsuji Michiko and Nakajima Chieko 辻ミチ子・中島智枝子, ‘Meiji Ishin to Kyōto no buraku」 「明治維新と京都の部落」, in KNBS: 2, p. 9.
urbanized 'eta' status quarter on Kyoto city's southern outskirts in Otagi district. During the Meiji years, that quarter became known as Yanagihara.

The Edo-period leaders of that quarter had enjoyed considerable wealth. Their prosperity was due to their mercantile activities and also to their enjoyment of tax exemptions and official stipends related to the performance by people under their authority of official services such as the cleaning of the Nijō castle grounds and sundry prison-related functions.\(^4\) The economic activities of most residents centred on the production of leather goods and footwear. Those trades are reported to have been exceptionally profitable during the last years of the Edo period. However, demand for their products declined through the 1870s, and dropped dramatically during the economic downturn of the late 1870s and early 1880s. According to Kobayashi Takehiro, this was because the mainstay of local economic production was a fairly expensive leather-soled sandal known as setta (雪駄). With the generalized economic difficulties of the time, he suggests, people found this commodity too expensive.\(^5\) Collapsing demand compounded the economic losses caused by the elimination of tax exemptions and the severance of official stipends subsequent to the abolition of the 'outcast' status groups in 1871.\(^6\) By 1884-1885, the majority of residents were reported to be experiencing economic difficulties.\(^7\)

The first detailed figures on Yanagihara's economic situation date to 1886, when the Kyoto Employment Bureau (Kangyōkyoku 勧業局) conducted a survey of 'former eta and hinin', as officials termed them, across the prefecture.

\(^{4}\) Kyōto Yanagiharachō shi「京都柳原町史」, 1892; in NSSS: 14, pp. 280-282.
\(^{5}\) Kobayashi Takehiro 小林丈広, 'Buraku no kyūbō to jishuteki kaizen undō「部落の窮乏と自立的改善運動」, in KNBS: 2, pp. 80-81.
\(^{6}\) Tsuji and Nakajima, 'Meiji Ishin', p. 18; Kobayashi, 'Buraku no kyūbō', p. 40.
\(^{7}\) Yanagiharachō shi「柳原町史」, in KNBS: 6, p. 242.
According to this study, 4,369 members of 1,111 households resided in Yanagihara. Table two records their occupational breakdown.

Table 2. Yanagihara household numbers by occupation, 1886

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waterwheel operator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land transport services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushmaking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household goods sales</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil sales</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human waste disposal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental goods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used timber merchants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish vendors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating establishments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor vendors</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inns</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice vendors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef vendors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used clothing merchants</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag and pouch production</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public baths</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable vendors</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather goods production</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets vendors</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawnshops</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit vendors</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear production</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,111</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The virtual absence of agriculturalists confirms that Yanagihara was a highly urbanized zone. That the principal occupational category was ‘miscellaneous’ is an unambiguous indication that the residents’ economic situation was unstable. Local conditions determine the nature of such casual

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54 Unno cites country-wide figures for 1883 indicating that apart from the peasant population, which at almost seventeen million was numerically far superior to any other occupational grouping, merchants counted almost one and a half million people, tradespeople some 800,000, and the ‘miscellaneous’ strata over two million. Across the country as a whole, the percentage of people classed as engaged in ‘miscellaneous’ trades in the non-agricultural sector was roughly fifty percent. Even compared to that figure, Yanagihara residents’ degree of reliance upon casual
labour. In the specific case of Yanagihara, the situation was probably quite similar to that which the local Hinode newspaper described in 1902.\(^{55}\) It reported that many Yanagihara residents made their livings by pulling rickshaws, repairing footwear, peddling fruit and vegetables, and collecting rubbish.\(^{56}\) Prefectural public works projects presumably also provided some residents with work.

Engaging in a range of economic activities without any particular specialization, most people’s income was variable, not to mention meagre. Of the total 1,111 households, only 362 were reported to be free of financial worries in their day-to-day lives. Of the 841 households without fixed occupation, 749 were experiencing economic difficulties, with 400 able to eat each day only by selling their clothing and other personal effects.\(^{57}\) The remaining 349 households no longer possessed anything saleable. Described by Kyoto prefecture officials as ‘on the brink of starvation’, they were supported by neighbours and local philanthropists.\(^{58}\)

**Administrative anomalies**

It is necessary here to make the point that Yanagihara was not officially a part of the Kyoto metropolitan area, and consequently it was subject to laxer

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\(^{55}\) Established in 1885 and run on the understanding with its fellow anti-government Chūgai Denpō newspaper that if one was banned, the other would stay in operation, the Hinode Shinbun was the precursor of today’s Kyoto Shinbun. Moriya Takeshi 守屋毅, ‘Meiji no seikatsu’ 明治の生活’, in Kyoto Shi (ed.), Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, p. 273.


\(^{57}\) Established in 1885 and run on the understanding with its fellow anti-government Chūgai Denpō newspaper that if one was banned, the other would stay in operation, the Hinode Shinbun was the precursor of today’s Kyoto Shinbun. Moriya Takeshi 守屋毅, ‘Meiji no seikatsu’ 明治の生活’, in Kyoto Shi (ed.), Kyōto no rekishi, vol. 8, p. 273.

\(^{58}\) ‘Himinkutsu, part 2, Shokugyô’ 貧民窟 (2) 職業, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 7 April 1902, in KBSS: 4, p. 340.
planning regulations and lighter taxation.\(^{59}\) This was presumably a boon to poorer residents. But the fact that it was not a part of Kyoto city administratively was extremely odd. Not only was Yanagihara highly urbanized, it also adjoined city districts and was conveniently located next to Kyoto station. In fact, after surrounding villages were incorporated into the Kyoto metropolitan area in 1902, Yanagihara was virtually encircled by city districts (see figure one and table three below).

**Figure 1. Kyoto city and surrounds, 1909**

![Population density per km²](image)

Table 3. Kyoto city population and metropolitan area, 1871-1918.\textsuperscript{60}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>237,674</td>
<td>18.4 km(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>236,038</td>
<td>(18.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>254,509</td>
<td>(18.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>296,639</td>
<td>29.77 km(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>342,724</td>
<td>(29.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>375,841</td>
<td>(29.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>395,981</td>
<td>31.28 km(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>483,197</td>
<td>(31.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>668,930</td>
<td>60.43 km(^2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Kyoto Shi (ed.), \textit{Kyōto no rekishi}, vol. 10, p. 105.)

Media reports clarified some of the reasons for this situation. With the impending countrywide implementation of a new City Administration System (\textit{Shisei} 市制) and a new Town and Village Administration System (\textit{Chōsonsei} 郡村制) in 1889, lengthy debate arose in Kyoto with regard to the future status of villages and towns adjoining or proximate to the metropolitan area. The \textit{Hinode} newspaper reported in September 1888 that Kyoto’s ward and district heads had convened to discuss Yanagihara’s classification in the coming administration systems. None wanted the area in their jurisdictions, with one official claiming that some innate ‘peculiarity’ caused people to despise its residents, and another suggesting that it would be best to make it into a special autonomous district. It was the desire of Yanagihara residents, the article’s author added, that their area be incorporated into Kyoto city’s Shimogyō ward.\textsuperscript{61}

In late 1888, Kyoto prefecture officials decided that Yanagihara’s administrative classification should be transferred from Otagi district to Kii district. The official documentation provided by the Kyoto governor to the

\textsuperscript{60}1871-1881 figures refer to the area bounded by the Kamo river (on the east), and by the streets of Shichijō (south), Kuramaguchi (north), and Senbon (west). From 1888, areas east of the Kamo river were added (Jōdoji, Okazaki etc). In 1902, the city area increased again with the addition of parts of Kuzuno district, and again in 1918 with the addition of Yanagihara and other areas adjoining the city.

\textsuperscript{61}‘Yanagiharashō wo ikan sen’ ‘柳原荘を奈何せん’, \textit{Hinode Shinbun} 『日出新聞』, 9 September 1888, in \textit{KBSS}: 3, pp. 190-191.
Interior Ministry regarding this measure briefly explained that Yanagihara had become detached from the rest of Otagi district as a result of the expansion of the Kyoto metropolitan area, and therefore was to be re-classified as a part of Kii district.62

Providing a more detailed account of these processes, the Hinode Shinbun reported that since the recent decision to add nine surrounding ‘ordinary’ villages to the Kyoto metropolitan area, Yanagihara was no longer to have any geographical contiguity with any part of Otagi district. Officials had seen three possible solutions to this problem. One was to add Yanagihara to Kadono district. But as the Kadono district offices were on the other side of the city in Uzumasa, this proposal was discarded. Incorporation into the (virtually) encircling metropolitan ward of Shimogyō was the obvious and most rational option. But that possibility was rejected on the grounds that Yanagihara residents were too poor to bear the burden of metropolitan taxes. Thus, more or less by default, Yanagihara was made a part of Kii district, whose district offices were some distance to the south in Fushimi.63

That Yanagihara remained outside the metropolitan area was significant in terms of the fact that in Kyoto too, urban regulations targeting doss and tenement houses were forcing poorer people out of central zones. In Kyoto, the Interior Ministry’s ‘Inn Policing Regulations’ were enacted in December 1886. The Kyoto authorities restricted doss-house accommodation in the southern Shimogyō ward to two areas: Daibutsumae, which was adjacent to Yanagihara but within the metropolitan area, and Ikkancho, on the city’s west side (see figure

62 Kyoto fu 京都府. ‘Chōson bungōjō gun no kuiki henkō no gi ni tsuki jōshin’ 「町村分合上郡 の区域変更の義に付上申」. 27 December 1888, in KNBS: 6, p. 63.
63 ‘Yanagiharashō’ 「柳原荘」. Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』. 27 February 1889, in KNBS: 6, p. 63.
one above). In 1895, the authorities revised these regulations, removing the Daibutsumae area from the list of authorized doss-house operating zones.64

The Interior Ministry’s ‘Tenement House Construction Regulations’ (Nagaya Kenchiku Kisoku 長屋建築規則) were enacted in Kyoto in March 1890. Requiring each dwelling to be over five tsubo in area, or around 16.5 square metres, with tiled roofs, windows, ventilation, and so forth, these regulations inflated construction costs, as they had elsewhere.65 Taking floor space alone, five tsubo was a great step up from the two-tsubo tenement houses that had previously existed in some districts.66

As a result of these regulations, writes Kobayashi Takehiro, ‘impoverished people were obliged to gravitate towards the former “eta villages” that adjoined Kyoto city, but whose incorporation into the city had yet to be realized’.67 In particular, one can speculate that the de-listing of Daibutsumae as a doss-house operating district in 1895 caused an influx of people seeking accommodation into neighboring Yanagihara. Such trends are suggested by the fact that whereas the above-mentioned Yanagihara survey of 1886 recorded a

64 See Sugimori Tetsuya 杉森哲也, ‘Kinsei toshi Kyōto to “mibunteki shūen”—“Hōreki yonen Nishijin osaya nakama ikken” wo sozai toshite ‘近世都市京都と『身分的雑間』—『宝暦四年西陣縞屋仲間一件』を素材として’, in Tsukada et al. (eds.), Mibunteki shūen, pp. 348-349.


66 See ‘Hinminkutsu, part 4, Ishokujū’「貧民窟 (4) 衣食住」, Hinode Shinbun『日出新聞』, 9 April 1902, in KBSS: 4, pp. 342-343. Tenement housing of two tsubo— with one tatami mat and the remainder of beaten earth— was also common in Kobe and Osaka. See Harada, ‘1886 nen no toshi puran’, pp. 42-43. Law was not automatically reflected in actual constructions, of course. Despite massive development after 1892, which is to say after the introduction of various housing regulations, Kobe’s Shinkawa area still provided residents with one-room rental housing of only two jō, or around one tsubo, while a number were around two tsubo in the early-twentieth century. See Kagawa Haruko 賀川はる子, ‘Kōjō yori hinminkutsu he’工場より貧民窟へ, Kaizō『改造』, May 1920, in Tanaka Hiroshi and Wada Mamoru (eds.) 田中浩, 和田守編, Shisō no umi he, vol. 10, Kindai bunmei hihan 『思想の海へ 第10巻 近代文明批判』(東京: 社会評論社, 1990), p. 120.

population of 4,369 people in 1,111 households, an 1896 survey found 1,341 households, 4,591 registered residents, and a further 445 temporary residents.  

Local initiatives

As the above processes unfolded, Yanagihara residents were engaged in a number of local improvement initiatives. Currently available records detail the part played by local elites, and especially the role of a man named Sakurada Gihe (1832-1893). Born into a prominent local household of ‘eta’ status village officials, Sakurada was a central figure in Yanagihara during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Named village head in 1873, he became town mayor in 1889, when Yanagihara’s urban character received partial official recognition in the form of administrative re-classification as a town. He thereafter continued to hold that position until illness forced him to retire shortly before his death in 1893.

Arai Kōki, a Kii district official who worked with him in the early 1890s, recalled that Sakurada laboured tirelessly to improve the local area and to counter popular prejudices against its residents. To list a few of the initiatives that involved Sakurada, in June 1882, he was reportedly planning the publication of a local newspaper, presumably to further the education of residents. The following month, he distributed over one hundred women’s obi free of charge so that local women might look more respectable. In 1886, he sold off family

70 ‘Shinheimin shinbun’ '新平民新聞', Jiji Shinpō 『時事新報』, 5 June 1882, in KBSS: 3, p. 177. This project appears to have gone no further.

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treasures and opened up his granaries to needy local residents. Assisted by a German technical advisor, Sakurada participated in the establishment of a new shoe factory in 1887, while in 1888, local officials under his authority put the rights to the town's human waste out to tender and used the proceeds to help cover people's outstanding local taxes.

The fact that priests and schoolteachers attracted over four hundred people to an 1889 gathering at the local Saikōji temple, where they presented lectures on industry and enterprise, a slide show, and demonstrations of a variety of chemical experiments, suggests that such local improvement initiatives enjoyed a degree of popular support. But for the most part, people's actual views of and responses to local improvement measures, which were obviously founded on and fuelled by the financial and cultural capital of a small minority of residents, remain obscure. Here, I wish to essay a few speculative remarks concerning the issues of local hygiene and order.

As mentioned previously, during the late-Edo and Meiji periods, cholera caused great concern among officials and intellectuals, not to mention among the populace at large. The socio-political elites commonly assumed that the lifestyles of poor people were less hygienic than those of the respectable classes, and held...

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72 'Ko Sakurada Gihō shōden' 「故桜田儀兵衛翁小伝」, 7 November 1909, in KNBS: 6, pp. 149-151.
73 'Seikutsujō kaigyō'「制靴場開業」, Chūgai Denpō 『中外電報』, 11 October 1887, in KBSS: 3, p. 187.
74 'Funnōdai sonpi to naru' 「感尿代村費となる」, Shinonome Shinbun 『東雲新聞』, 13 April 1888, in KBSS: 3, p. 189. See also 'Yanagiharashō no shozoku to kihon zaisan' 「柳原荘の所属と基本財産」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 26 January 1889, in KBSS: 3, pp. 191-192. This measure was not unusual: the Kyoto authorities likewise sold human waste from public facilities as fertilizer to peasants for the purpose of providing relief to the poor. See Tsuji, 'Machigumi no kaisetsu', p. 498.
75 'Yanagihara no Byōdōkai' 「柳原の平等会」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 5 June 1889, in KBSS: 3, p. 193.
that such people were instrumental in the spread of contagion.\textsuperscript{76} Typical of them, Fukuzawa Yukichi pronounced in the summer of 1887 that there was a 'breed' (\textit{shuzoku} 種族) characterized by its lack of adherence to hygienic principles, the existence of which constituted a major obstacle to civilization and progress, namely poor people.\textsuperscript{77} So-called 'slum' and 'buraku' areas were deemed particular disease hotspots, and in so far as it attracted media and official surveillance as a result of such elite preconceptions, Yanagihara was no exception.

During the 1886 cholera outbreak, a writer for the \textit{Chūgai Denpō} newspaper announced to readers that Yanagihara was an unhygienic and malodorous area, and expressed surprise at the scarcity of cholera cases there. Seeking an explanation for what was evidently perceived as a remarkable phenomenon, the journalist concluded that it was doubtless due to the local custom of bathing frequently.\textsuperscript{78}

A week later, a follow-up report went into more detail. After describing Yanagihara as a former 'eta' status district that was popularly considered to be a 'den of infection' and a 'wellspring of filth', the \textit{Chūgai Denpō} reported that cholera was, in fact, less of a problem there than in adjoining city wards. According to the journalist, this welcome situation was the fruit of the combined efforts of the local headman, Sakurada Gihē, and the police, who had set about thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting people's homes. The same article quoted Sakurada as having stated that his efforts to improve local hygiene standards

\textsuperscript{76} See Anbo Norio 安保則夫, \textit{Minato Kōbe—korera / pesuto / suramu—shakaiteki sabetsu keiseitsukö no kenkyū} 『ミナト神戸―コラ・ペスト・スラム―社会的差別形成史の研究』 (京都: 学芸出版, 1989), p. 175, for example.

\textsuperscript{77} Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, 'Eisei ron '衛生論', \textit{Jiji Shinpō} 『時事新報』, 5 August 1887, in SNS, pp. 268-270.

\textsuperscript{78} 「 Yokujō ha akueki yōbō no ittan nari」「浴場は疫疫予防の一端なり」, \textit{Chūgai Denpō} 『中外電報』, 28 May 1886, in \textit{KNBS}: 6, pp. 285-286.
were motivated by his belief that 'if [cholera] patients did appear, people would say it was because we are former eta.'

Cholera struck the city of Kyoto again in 1890, and once more, reporters remarked on the relative absence of patients in Yanagihara. As well as being the result of thorough and effective action by local elites and police, that situation may have reflected the district's social isolation resulting from mainstream prejudices. But it also suggests that residents were putting hygienic principles into practice on a daily basis. And while local disinfection programs and education about public health were no doubt important factors, Sakurada's notion that locals needed to attain and maintain a certain living standard in order to free themselves from discrimination may well have been a decisive factor inciting residents to adopt and adhere to hygienic practices.

The Meiji government's program of urban modernization was initiated by representatives of the state and furthered by means of official regulation and public works projects. But the smooth running of everyday city life—the control of contagious disease, for example—depended on reforming the masses such that they became self-disciplining subjects whose everyday practices were oriented towards the maintenance of certain standards of order and hygiene. The apparent success of anti-cholera measures in Yanagihara during the late 1880s and early 1890s points to the possibility that, from the perspective that their acquisition of respectability would be a means of gaining liberation from

80 'Chūi no kōnō' 『注意の効能』. Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 31 August 1890, in KNBS: 6, p. 303.
prejudice, residents had internalised some of the stipulated norms of modern city life.

Such ideas about gaining and maintaining respectability surfaced more explicitly in subsequent action taken by local elites to rid the area of poor incomers. In 1889, Sakurada Gihē and the West Honganji Temple-affiliated teacher Miyajima Kurahachi, among others, formed the Yanagihara Enterprise Association (Shinshukai 进取会). Their aim was to ‘foster wisdom, accumulate capital, and make the term “new commoner” a designation of great worth’.82 In concrete terms, this group’s founders desired to improve residents’ morality and promote local economic development. They rapidly reached the conclusion that their lack of success in realizing these goals was due to the presence of undesirable people in their town. To bring about improvements, they opined that it was above all necessary to drive out convicted criminals, gamblers, and other villains from their midst.83

Financial difficulties caused the Enterprise Association to founder.84 But local elites did organize themselves to rid the town of ‘undesirable’ people. In 1893, propertied Yanagihara residents joined together to deal with unwanted incomers and others by forming the House Owners’ Alliance (Iemochi Dōmei 家持同盟). Members of this group aimed to bring about the expulsion of all those who ‘conduct themselves in a way damaging to the image of this town’, as well as ‘those who are despised by others’, and ‘those who draw the attention of others’. Alliance members were to go about this by refusing to rent to or share

82 ‘Yanagiharachō Shinshukai’「柳原町進取会」, Kansai Nippō 『関西日報』, 30 August 1889, in KBSS: 3, pp. 196-197.
83 ‘Yanagiharachō no Shinshukai’「柳原町の進取会」, Kyoto Nippō 『京都日報』, 11 March 1890, in KBSS: 3, p. 198.
84 ‘Yanagiharachō no Shinshukai’「柳原町の進取会」, Kyoto Nippō 『京都日報』, 28 September 1890, in KBSS: 3, p. 200.
houses with such persons.\(^8^5\) It is unclear whether these measures, which almost certainly were adapted from the local management strategies of house-owner associations in Edo-period city communities (chō町),\(^8^6\) were put into practice. But those intentions were given practical expression the following year.

In 1894, the Kyoto police cracked down on the city’s poor residents, of whom ‘the most destitute sought to find their feet in Yanagihara’.\(^8^7\) There too, their presence proved to be unwelcome. And in their endeavours to keep out such poor incomers, elite ‘buraku’ residents began utilizing the services of the police force. In the summer of 1894, ‘given that many villains driven out of Kyoto city come to Yanagihara, the good people [of Yanagihara] have united’, reported the Hinode newspaper, to conduct an ‘urban cleansing’ campaign.\(^8^8\) Yanagihara elites joined forces with the Kyoto police and prefectural officials to search people’s homes, investigate those present, and expel ‘suspicious’ and ‘undesirable’ people from the town.\(^8^9\) Such links with officialdom were reinforced in subsequent years, with local elites building and donating a station house to the Kyoto police force in 1897, and renovating it the following year.\(^9^0\)

Modernization from below

In Kyoto, late-nineteenth century economic trends and urban policy had the effect of bringing urban ‘buraku’ residents and poor people together on the

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85 ‘Yanagiharachō no dōmei kiyaku’「柳原町の同盟規約」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 17 November 1893, in KNBS: 6, pp. 146-147.
86 See Noguchi Toru 野口徳, Nihon kinsei no toshi to kenchiku 『日本近代の都市と建築』(東京 : 法政大学出版局, 1992), pp. 111-112.
87 Kobayashi, ‘Buraku no kōōbo to jishuteki kaizen undo’, p. 75.
89 ‘Narazumonogari」「破落戸者狩」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 11 July 1894, in KNBS: 6, p. 309.
90 ‘Yanagiharachō no torishimari」「柳原町の取締」, Hinode Shinbun 『日出新聞』, 18 June 1898, in KBSS: 4, p. 166.
same geographical space. Ensuing relations between members of these marginalised parts of society were fraught with tension. This was by no means a phenomenon unique to Yanagihara. The journalist Sakurada Bungo described the same processes in his 1890 reportages on the lives of the lower classes in Osaka, and reports of class- and social position-related friction among ‘ordinary’ poor people elsewhere suggest that battles for position and respectability were widespread among those who found themselves on the outer fringes of the social order that was undergoing construction in the Meiji years.

In Yanagihara, as Kobayashi Takehiro notes, despite inhabiting the same locality, such animosity saw ‘buraku’ residents and ‘incomers’ retain a degree of separation in their everyday lives, each viewing the other as the primary cause of the prejudices directed at them by mainstream society. It is likely that all residents of Yanagihara were subjected to prejudices from the outside related to perceptions of them not only as poor, but also as ‘new commoners’. It is also clear that those same prejudices affected residents. Engaged in a battle for social position, residents attacked the weaknesses of those to whom they could most readily consider to be superior. Incomers denigrated prior residents on the grounds that they were ‘new commoners’, while the respectable residents of Yanagihara, as well, no doubt, as those who aspired to respectability, denigrated incomers based on prevailing mainstream prejudices against poor people.

91 Sakurada Bungo 桜田文吾, ‘Kikankutsu’ 『飢寒窟』, Nihon 『日本』, 7 October to 8 November 1890, in Nishida (ed.), Meiji zenki rōdō jijō, pp. 204-205. See also Inoue, ‘Himinkutsu’, p. 747; and Harada, ‘Kindai shakai to suramu’, p. 190.
93 Kobayashi, ‘“Tokushu buraku”’, pp. 5-7.
In the aim of demonstrating their respectability and rendering manifest the illegitimacy of the prejudices that people directed at them, Yanagihara elites took action to exclude poor incomers and other undesirables. Their urban cleansing program—which was designed to turn their area into a model city district by purifying the community of unwelcome elements—replicated locally the urban program instituted in the early-Meiji period by representatives of the state. By the turn of the century, in other words, and albeit for very different motivations, some Yanagihara residents had become active participants in the national project of modernizing Japan’s cities and turning them into bright, well-ordered and, in a word, civilized, spaces.
Chapter seven

Lifestyle reform and improvement

Shaping early Meiji life

Meiji-period officials and intellectuals relentlessly intervened in people’s everyday lives, aiming to reform and improve them in the interests of furthering Japan’s progress and development. Given that there was considerable overlap between people’s everyday desires and the intentions of state authorities, measures imposed from above commonly were matched by initiatives from below, as suggested in the previous chapter. In order to undertake a somewhat more detailed inquiry into these processes, this chapter looks firstly at early attempts to deal with popular prejudices, and then examines one of the more celebrated autonomous reform programs. It continues by following the rise of official interest in the ‘buraku problem’, and ends with an attempt to throw some light upon the concrete uses and effects of reform.
After the Meiji government abolished the ‘outcast’ status groups in 1871, officials often suggested to former ‘outcast’ status people that they were subject to ostracism and denigration because of their involvement in polluted occupations involving the production of leather goods. Having become commoners and acquired liberty of occupation and residence, the authorities indicated that they should avail themselves of those opportunities and change their ways.

A Kochi prefecture proclamation typified this tendency. It directed newly emancipated former ‘eta’ status people to ‘conduct cleansing rites in rivers, purify yourselves of existing pollution, and renew the fires of your hearths’. Such measures, officials suggested, constituted the ‘path towards commonerhood’.

Almost identical directives came from Anōtsu (Mie) prefecture, as well as Watarai prefecture (also Mie). Matsuyama prefecture (Ehime) authorities urged ‘former eta’ to work harder, and ritually and physically cleanse themselves.

Ehime prefecture officials told ‘former eta’ that they should become ‘clean’ (seiketsu 清潔), and cleanse themselves of pollution. Sakai (Osaka) prefecture officials pressed former ‘outcasts’ to ‘give up your errant ways’, while Ōtsu (Shiga) prefecture authorities likewise advised, ‘Give up the evil ways of eta’.

Among the few practical measures taken by officials following ‘outcast’ abolition, Kochi prefecture authorities conducted official cleansing ceremonies for people formerly of ‘eta’ status shortly after their directive that such

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1 Kochi ken kokuyu 高知県告諭, 10/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 444.
2 Anōtsu ken furegaki 安濃津県告, 9/1871, in MKBS, p. 21.
3 Watara ken tatsu 濱会県達, 10/1871, in MKBS, p. 22.
4 Matsuyama ken shirei 松山県指令, 5/12/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 441.
5 Himeji ken kokuyu 姫路県告諭, 12/10/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 344-345.
7 Ōtsu ken setsuyu 大津県説論, 9/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 239.
people should rid themselves of pollution. In Mie also, whether as a consequence of official directives or as a result of more independent initiatives, some local former 'kawata' went to the Ise shrines to cleanse themselves and obtain 'pure' fire for their hearths.

Explicitly and implicitly, officials told former 'kawata' to renounce their former occupations, purify themselves, and become clean and hygienic. The message was that by ridding themselves of the occupational pollution and uncleanness that attracted popular denigration, they would eventually improve their social standing.

Earlier in 1871, and prior to such official exhortations, some people of 'eta' status had already taken steps to give up work involving the production of leather goods in a bid to counter popular denigration. When the government removed that status group's monopoly over deceased stock in the spring of 1871, a number of Hyogo communities responded by drawing up village agreements that banned community members from involvement in 'unclean trades'. Needless to say, the primary economic activity of the communities that took this type of action tended to be agriculture.

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9 Kaika Shinbun 『開化新聞』12/1871, in MKBS, p. 22.
10 Most legal obligations on upper class people who became polluted (as a result of deaths in the family, for example) to avoid social intercourse for a set period were lifted in the first years of the Meiji period, presumably because they were 'errant ways' that obstructed economic activity. But certain former types of pollution such as butchering and tanning of hides and so forth were open to re-definition and stigmatization as unhygienic, suggesting connections between the decline of pollution and the rise of hygiene.
The trend for former ‘kawata’ status people to abandon leather-related work intensified after the promulgation of the ‘abolition’ decree. In Hyogo prefecture, residents of five Asago district communities signed a pledge to give up ‘lowly occupations’ involving dead stock. In Nara prefecture, representatives of the community of Sangōchō determined that they should give up dealing with stock carcasses (as well as drinking to excess, fighting and gambling), as did residents of numerous Osaka villages.

As Hatanaka Toshiyuki has observed, considerable numbers of former ‘kawata’ status people thus chose a degree of economic uncertainty over the possibility of continuing engagement in traditional occupations giving rise to continued denigration. In Shiga, ‘many people got into economic difficulties as a result [of abandoning leather-related work], but buraku people tried to endure those difficulties in order to prove that they were no longer eta.’ In 1871 the residents of Osaka’s Minamiōji village looked around for other job options, enquiring about the possibility of developing the land surrounding their local shrine. It was only in 1873, feeling that they would be able to make a living from other work, that they ultimately determined to give up former occupations involving dead stock, and to introduce punishments for those who infringed

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13 Gokason torishimari kitei issatsu no koto 五ヶ村取締規定一札之事, 10/1871, in KBSS: 1, pp. 345-346.
14 Sashiire mōshite torishimari issatsu no koto 差入申取締一札之事, 1/1872, in KBSS: 2, pp. 347-8.
17 Hirai Kiyotaka 平井清隆, ‘Kaihōrei to Shiga no buraku’ 『解放令と滋賀の部落』, Buraku mondai, August 1971, p. 21. Hirai goes on to note that the residents of one village saw this decrease in competition as an opportunity to expand their own operations, and rapidly acquired a local quasi-monopoly.
18 Osorenagara sōtō tangan tatematsuri mōshiage sōtō 乍恐恥顔類奉申上候, 7/11/1871, in KBSS: 1, pp. 323-324.
village regulations on the matter. Even if such leather-related work had often been of secondary economic importance for the people who took this kind of action, to give those economic activities up altogether was a step that required some preparation, and the assurance of alternative sources of income.

To lessen the possibility of impoverishment, and going against the trend for officials to encourage former leather-goods producers to change their ways, some prefectures in fact directed them to continue on with their former occupations. The Kyoto authorities had foreseen that the loss of occupational privileges and official stipends related to policing duties and leather-goods production would cause economic problems. With their announcement of the abolition decree to Amabe village residents, the authorities stated that since their former occupations had become commoner occupations, there was no need to abandon them. In the years after abolition, Fukuoka, Oita, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki prefectures likewise directed former 'eta' status people to continue with leather-working activities.

In a few extreme cases, former 'kawata' people who had given up 'unclean' trades ostracized those who had not. Residents of two former 'eta' status communities adjoining the Shiga prefecture village of Sakamoto broke off relations in 1873. This rupture eventuated because while residents of one community had given up 'unclean' occupations in the aim of ridding themselves of all reminders of their former status, those of the other community had insufficient land to be able to subsist on agriculture alone, and continued to

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19 Murajū torishimari kiteisho '村中取締規定書', 22 October 1873, in KBSS: 2, pp. 287-288.
21 Fukuoka ken shirei 福岡県指令, 14/11/1871, in KBSS: 1, p. 459.
22 Ōita ken kokuyu 大分県告諭, 5/2/1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 624.
23 Hiroshima ken kokuyu 広島県告諭, 4/1872, in KBSS: 2, p. 504.
24 Nagasaki ken kokuyu 長崎県告諭, 30 September 1873, in KBSS: 2, p. 618.
engage in the production of leather goods. The same phenomenon occurred in what is today Okayama prefecture. In 1876, the Hōjō prefecture authorities deplored the fact that ‘among the new commoners of [Hōjō] prefecture, divisions of daikumi (大組, literally ‘big team’) and shōkumi (小組 ‘small team’) have arisen. Those who work with stock carcasses are called shōkumi; those who do not are called daikumi, and they despise those of the shōkumi, and ostracize them’.

Occupational change, in the form of the renunciation of leather-related work, was the most thoroughgoing tactic that former ‘kawata’ status people adopted in trying to improve their social situation. The choice of economic uncertainty over the prospect of continuing denigration, and attempts to distance themselves from others too poor or unwilling to give up so-called ‘lowly’ occupations, reflect a powerful desire for self-betterment.

That desire also surfaced in other initiatives, and notably in education-related projects. Ronald Dore has written on people’s high average level of education during the Edo period, and suggests that the spread of education was ‘a symptom of growing mobility aspirations’. Presumably, popular interest in education and self-improvement had also been recommended by Confucianists, given the Great Learning’s suggestion that ‘From the son of heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of

26 Hōjō ken kokuyu 北条県告諭, 5 March 1876, in KBSS: 2, pp. 502-503.
Building on such popular and intellectual foundations, the Meiji regime stressed the importance of education to the general population, announcing in the Education Law of September 1872 that "knowledge may be regarded as the capital for raising one’s self". Fukuzawa Yukichi, the bestselling intellectual, likewise proposed in the early 1870s that people were born equal, and education or lack thereof would determine whether one was to prosper or decline thereafter. Given that many people, especially from the former military classes, successfully used education as a means to personal advancement, the powers that officials and intellectuals attributed were partially real.

Attracted by the notion that education was the path to higher status in the new age, and relying heavily on the immense wealth of some local residents, the people of Osaka’s Watanabe village set about building a modern school. The Tokyo Chōya Shinbun reported of it that ‘although Osaka prefecture is great, there is no other school so grand as this one’. Elsewhere, the Nagasaki Shinbun related that local former ‘kawata’ had put the spirit of the abolition decree into practice by strongly encouraging the education of their children. Similar reports came from Shiga, Kyoto, Nara and elsewhere.

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32 *Chōya Shinbun* 『朝野新聞』, 7 October 1874, in *KBSS*: 2, p. 297.
33 *Nagasaki Shinbun* 『長崎新聞』, 13 and 15 October 1875, in *KBSS*: 2, pp. 621-622.
34 *Shiga Shinbun* 『滋賀新聞』, 10/1872, in *KBSS*: 2, p. 228.
Although ‘new commoner’ enthusiasm for change and betterment matched early-Meiji ruling class desires for renovation and modernization, changing occupations and accumulating learning did not often enable them to lead a better life. In fact, changing occupations caused economic difficulties, which the cost of education exacerbated. If anything, coming top of the loss of official stipends and tax exemptions, early improvement efforts quite possibly worsened many people’s economic living conditions.

**Betterment and ‘conventional morality’**

After promulgating the abolition decree, the central government displayed little direct interest in the situation of ‘new commoners’. It did not implement any specific policies, provide economic assistance, or ban specific ‘discriminatory’ practices.\(^{38}\) ‘New commoners’ relied upon self-initiated reform and improvement measures in their attempts to improve their lives and combat prejudice.

The main explanation of phenomena such as poverty and social marginalisation during that time held that people were responsible for their own circumstances. Analyses of the often dismal situation of ‘new commoners’ were

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38 Ōe Taku called for the establishment of employment and training centers for former ‘outcasts’ in Osaka and Tokyo in his two submissions on abolition, but nothing came of them. Ōe Taku 大江卓, ‘Senshō haishi no kenpakusho’ 『賛称廃止の達白書』, 1871, in SHYH, pp. 52-56. Otherwise, there were calls for emigration that I discussed in chapter three, but they were not taken terribly seriously as a policy option. According to the Liberal Party’s newspaper, a ‘new commoner’ gathering in Kyoto in 1884 discussed the possibility of asking the government to crack down on discrimination, but nothing seems to have come of it. See ‘Shutsugan no kyōgi’ 『出願の協議』, *Jiyū Shinbun 『自由新聞』*, 30 March 1884, in KBSS: 3, p. 184. As mentioned in chapter two, legal equality did provide a weapon against certain kinds of discriminatory behaviour.
no exception. ‘New commoner’ elites informed the ‘new commoner’ masses that certain of their characteristics, commonly including lack of hygiene, immorality, poverty, and lack of education, caused others to despise them. The inference was that if they desired to be treated equitably and considerately by others, they would first have to improve themselves. For example, one prosperous former ‘outcast’ status rice merchant criticized people for looking on ‘new commoners’ with prejudice despite publicly espousing enlightenment. But he then concluded that community improvements were necessary above all. A former Nagano prefecture ‘outcast’ village headman expressed the same sentiments, announcing that communities would have to bring about internal reforms before people would treat residents as equals.

That self-improvement was the primary step towards liberation from prejudice was also the core teaching of most ‘buraku’ organizations of the 1880s and 1890s. Although the Fukuoka-based League for the Restoration of Rights did not last long enough to take any practical action, its leaders drafted a statement of purpose in which they made clear their belief that the origins of ‘new commoner’ denigration lay in the ‘lowly’ occupations and behaviour that some amongst them engaged in. The Kyushu Commoners’ Association expressed a similar view, proposing that ‘new commoners’ needed to be more enterprising and strive harder to secure a better social position. The Equality Association of Kochi

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prefecture’s Tosa district preferred a virtually identical statement. External commentators, who ceaselessly informed ‘new commoners’ that their various ‘deficiencies’ were responsible for their plight, reinforced internally generated calls for community improvement.

The claim that the targets of denigration were themselves responsible for that denigration was obviously a defective explanation that completely ignored the complex factors involved in the social and economic marginalisation of ‘new commoners’. Nonetheless, many people appear to have accepted it to be a valid one, perhaps because it was a straightforward expression of what Yasumaru Yoshio has termed the ‘conventional morality’ (tsūzoku dōtoku 通俗道德) of the time.

According to conventional morality, personal circumstances largely reflected one’s degree of morality. That is, one’s diligent or otherwise practice of meritorious activities such as industry, thrift, and filial piety determined one’s success or failure in life. This view of things tended to obscure the effects of social, political and economic factors upon individual circumstances. ‘If I were poor, conventional morality would tell me it was because I did not work hard enough. If my home were not harmonious, it would tell me that resulted from my


44 Such commentary has been looked at through this thesis. To take just two views on the matter, Matsumoto Gorō declared that ‘new commoners’ needed to become prosperous and clean in order to have normal social relations. Matsumoto Gorō 松本五郎, ‘Shinheimin kyūsaikaku’ 「新平民救済策」, Dōyō Shinbun 『土陽新聞』, April 1884, in SNS, pp. 123-127. From a different perspective, but making the implications of Matsumoto’s statement explicit, a writer in the Shinonome newspaper attributed the whole gamut of negative virtues to ‘new commoners’ in explaining denigration of them. See Oson Gyokyaku 遠村漁客, ‘Tō Daien Inshi」 「答大円居士」, Shinonome Shinbun 『東雲新聞』, 6 March 1888, in KBSS: 3, p. 558.
lack of piety.'

Concrete difficulties and problems were attributed to personal moral shortcomings. Conventional morality explained that people who were failures in life were morally deficient.

This was by no means a monolithic or universal view. The literary critic Taoka Reiun pointed out that 'the poor are not necessarily so as a result of sloth; their guilt cannot be automatically assumed'.

But as the fact that he was compelled to make such an argument suggests, it was a dominant view, and it appeared in Meiji-period assertions about 'new commoners' being responsible for their own plight (as we shall see below, other figures were to join Taoka in adopting a more nuanced approach towards explaining phenomena such as poverty and social marginalisation during the 1890s).

As Yasumaru has pointed out, conventional morality was influential precisely because it contained a modicum of truth. If one lived according to its teachings and practiced thrift and industry, a certain degree of improvement, albeit usually only of an incremental nature, would generally follow.

Conventional morality thus did not lock people into whatever circumstances they found themselves in. While it attributed personal moral failings to people in explaining dire personal circumstances, it also encouraged people to set about rectifying those circumstances by practicing moral behaviour.

For instance, during the Meiji period, officials, literati, and the emerging middle classes levelled accusations of moral deficiency at labourers and factory

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workers, and they responded by adopting ‘moral’ tactics. Workers resented being scorned, and their ‘overwhelming reaction [...] was to try, by cultivating respectable behaviour, to overcome the stigma put on them.’ Concretely, that meant exhorting each other to frugality, sobriety, regularity, and night study, or in other words, to engage in the kinds of practices advocated by conventional morality, not to mention by government officials.

Like factory workers, ‘new commoners’ and ‘buraku’ residents attempted to make themselves respectable in order to free themselves from popular prejudices. To illustrate this process in somewhat more detail, I will consider the celebrated case of a village named Yoshino that was located in Shizuoka prefecture.

Reforming Yoshino

The reforms implemented by the villagers of Yoshino constitute one of the better-known examples of internally generated and managed community reform in the Meiji period. Yoshino (now part of Hamamatsu city) was then a rural community of around fifteen hundred people on Hamamatsu’s urban fringe. During the Edo period, there had been a ‘kawata’ village there, with residents engaging in leather trades, footwear production, and agriculture. After abolition, it appears that villagers focused more on agricultural pursuits.

48 Yasumaru, *Nihon no kindaika*, pp. 112-114.
50 Shiraishi Masaaki cautions that the campaign was not fully autonomous, in the sense that the leaders of the campaign drew on police authority to achieve their aims, and presumably also acted under police influence. Shiraishi Masaaki 白石正明, ‘Kaidai: Shizuoka ken Hamana gun Yoshino mura jiseki (shiryō)’ 「解題：静岡県浜名郡吉野村事績(資料)」, in Arai Kōjirō (ed.) 荒井貞次郎編, *Kantō / Tōkai hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū 『関東・東海被差別部落史研究』* (東京：明石書店, 1982), pp. 453-454.
According to the recollections of those who ran the Yoshino reform campaign, village order deteriorated noticeably during the second decade of the Meiji period, as gambling and drinking became rife. Records relate that such undesirable trends had an increasing negative impact on the ‘good villagers’. Since the sources I draw on in this section all detail how reform brought about great improvements, there is perhaps some degree of exaggeration in their dire descriptions of Yoshino’s pre-reform state. But traditional community order had been changing rapidly, especially since the late-Edo period. As a result of developments associated with the establishment of a market economy, ‘people acquired many opportunities to pursue the fulfilment of new experiences and desires’. Not a few ceded to their desires, according to an official history of Hamamatsu, thereby giving rise to strident complaints from rural leaders about how the infiltration of decadent urban culture into the countryside was eroding local values and order. In Yoshino’s case, these processes were accentuated during the first part of the Meiji period by a rise in profits from the production of geta. Sudden but temporary wealth was linked to problems with gambling.

All accounts of the reform of Yoshino village begin with the actions of two village youths, Kitamura Denzaburō (1872-1937) and Hase Fujikazu (1877-19??). Male youths from the ‘new commoner’ middle classes—educated, wealthy, and yet subject to prejudice—were the usual agents of autonomous Meiji-period ‘buraku’ reform. In this regard, Yoshino was no exception, although we must

51 ‘Shizuoka ken Hamana gun Yoshino mura jiseki’ [静岡県浜名郡吉野村事績], Kanpō 『官報』, 25 November 1903, in KBSS: 4, pp. 141-142.
52 Yasumaru, Nihon no kindaika, pp. 41-43.
add that reformist activities by middle class youths were a countrywide phenomenon not limited to ‘buraku’ communities.55

During the Edo period, male rural youths had commonly been organized into ‘young men’s groups’ (wakarenchū 若連中 or wakamonogumi 若者組). Members of these socializing institutions performed communal tasks including road- and water-works, fire-fighting, and the conveyance of rice taxes to the authorities.56 Due to the fact that activities such as fire-fighting, policing, public works and education were largely taken over by government organizations during the Meiji period, the social utility of such groups decreased. Reputedly degenerating into hotbeds of drinking, loose morals and idleness, they became an official irritation. By the mid-Meiji years, authorities perceived of them as immoral bodies that undid the moral teachings of the primary education system.57

In this context, there emerged a new type of ‘young men’s association’ (seinendan 青年団). Youths influenced by the Freedom and Civil Rights movement of the 1870s and 1880s, and by the establishment of an elected

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national assembly in 1890, organized themselves ‘in reaction against the former young men’s groups […] to reform and improve the moral atmosphere’ of their communities.\textsuperscript{58} The Yoshino village initiatives can be positioned within this wider move.\textsuperscript{59}

While little is known about Hase, Kitamura was born into a wealthy Yoshino family. According to the village record of Yoshino’s reform program,\textsuperscript{60} he studied law and political economy as an external student (kōgaisei 校外生) at Japan Law School (\textit{Nihon Hōritsu Gakkō} 日本法律学校—later Nihon University 日本大学) and Tokyo Technical School (\textit{Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō} 東京専門学校). Concerned by the state of his home village, and stirred by the promulgation of the Meiji constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education, he began encouraging Yoshino residents to become hygienic, and to practice industry and thrift in their daily lives. Kitamura established a Fire-fighting Association in 1895,\textsuperscript{61} and centred on the young male membership of that body, he formed a Moral Improvement Alliance (\textit{Fūzoku Kaizen Dōmei} 風俗改善同盟) in 1898, to put a stop to gambling, drinking, immorality, and idleness within the village community.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{59}It would be desirable to refer to the activities of young women’s groups, but it seems that little work has been done on them. See Ōtō Osamu 大藤尾, \textit{Kinsei nōmin no ie / mura / kokka—seikatsuushi no shiza kara} 『近世農民の家・村・国家―生活史・社会史の視座から』(東京: 吉川弘文館, 1996), p. 131.
\textsuperscript{60}This local history was drafted in 1919 to commemorate Interior Ministry recognition of the village’s merits as a ‘model village’ (mohanson 模範村), and was printed with prize money awarded by Tokonami Takejirō, the Interior Minister of the time.
\textsuperscript{61}In May of 1894, the Shizuoka prefectural assembly established new urban fire-fighting unit regulations, and that stimulated youthful residents of urban fringe communities like Yoshino to form their own auxiliary fire-fighting units. See Hamamatsu Shiyakusho (ed.), \textit{Hamamatsu shishi}, vol. 3, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{62}Shizuoka ken Hamana gun Yoshino mura jiseki‘「静岡県浜名郡吉野村事績」, 1919, in NSSS: 25, p. 669.
A village code of conduct was the main weapon that this association deployed to ensure the compliance of residents with the behavioural standards it was introducing. Like conventional morality and youth groups, village codes of conduct were an element of Edo-period village life that proved useful in the Meiji years. Such codes had been indispensable during the Edo period, when villagers had regulated most intra-village matters.\(^63\) Primarily aimed at improving productivity, such village codes had focused on restricting nocturnal play and encouraging thrift, industry, tax-paying, and savings.\(^64\) They also covered matters to do with order, regulating theft, gambling and letting suspicious people stay in one’s home, and typically contained provisions, which ranged from small fines to ostracism and banishment, for punishing infringements.\(^65\)

After having waned in influence during the early-Meiji period, presumably due to widespread social unrest and change, village codes experienced a revival during the mid-Meiji years.\(^66\) Their renaissance was partly a factor of the above-mentioned deterioration in social order, as well as of widespread economic difficulties in rural areas particularly. Government pressure was also an important stimulus.


\(^{64}\) Maeda Masaharu 前田正治, Nihon kinsei sonpō no kenkyū, furoku, Sonpō shū『日本近世村法の研究付録村法集』(東京: 有斐閣, 1950), pp. 86-87, 165.


\(^{66}\) Takeuchi Toshimi 竹内利美, ‘Mura no okite to jiyū」村の制と自由」, in Tsuboi Hirofumi et al. 坪井洋文他著, Nihon minzoku bunka taikei, vol. 8, Mura to murabito / Kyōdōtai no seikatsu to girei.『日本民俗文化大系 第8巻 村と村人・共同体の生活と儀礼』(東京: 小学館, 1984), p. 251.
In the aftermath of the cycle of depression, inflation and deflation of the late 1870s and early 1880s, and to alleviate the impact of any future economic downturns, political elites called for people to be more frugal and industrious. Maeda Masana, then First Secretary of the Ministry for Agriculture and Trade, came to Shizuoka and made speeches exhorting people to put more effort into industry, thrift, and savings. In the wake of his visit, village heads across the prefecture imposed village codes forbidding people to waste time or engage in meaningless banter, ordering them to wear cheap clothes, and to hold only frugal funerals and weddings.\(^67\)

Although the Yoshino village Moral Improvement Alliance’s regulations were introduced around a decade later, they contained the same kinds of measures. The Yoshino village code encouraged the correction of errant ways, and promoted moral action, savings, charity and education towards the creation of ‘loving and harmonious homes’ (Chapter one, Article two). It banned bad language, quarrelling, singing and drinking after midnight, theft and gambling (Chapter one, Article five). Offenders were first to be named on the village notice board, and depending on the degree of the offence, fined as well (Chapter one, Article six). Failure to denounce others attracted similar punishment (Chapter two, Article twenty-five). Fines were to provide the association with funds for rewarding good acts (Chapter two, Article twenty-seven).\(^68\) A 1903 set of Articles on Thrift and Industry supplemented the 1898 code. These Articles went into more detail, imposing restrictions on luxurious clothing (Article

\(^67\) Gōshū Fuchi gun Asada mura no sonpō ‘遠州敷知郡浅田村の村法’, Shizuoka Daimu Shinbun 『静岡大藩新聞』, 5 and 6 September 1885, in le to mura, pp. 168-172. See also ‘Kinben sokken chochiku kiyakusho’「勤勉節儉貯蓄規約書」, 18 November 1885, in le to mura, pp. 164-167.

\(^68\) Fuzoku kaizen dōmeikai kiyaku ‘風俗改善同盟会規約」, 28 December 1898, in NSSS: 25, pp. 671-675.
thirteen), extravagant personal accessories (Article fourteen), marriage expenses (Article sixteen), and so on.  

These measures elicited a great deal of praise from external observers. In 1903, the Christian *Fukuon Shinbun* published an article entitled ‘The model works of a new commoner community’. The anonymous author reported that Yoshino’s new regulations had improved behaviour, as shown by the reduction in infringements of the village code from seventeen cases in 1898, to eleven in 1900, and to seven cases in 1901. People had lodged thirteen denunciations in the censure box that reform leaders had installed to receive anonymous complaints.  

The journal *Education Today* also reported on this campaign. ‘These villagers’ desire for advancement is a truly splendid thing’, it declared. Gambling had been eradicated, and people were so trustworthy that there was no need for more than a verbal promise when it came to making loans. ‘In the past, it was a village that the police were unable to control. Today it does not even need a constable’. In August 1903, the *City, Town and Village Journal* added its voice to this chorus of approval, reporting that the villagers of the ‘small autonomous municipality’ of Yoshino had progressed such that visually, the settlement was ‘of an almost unprecedented beauty’.  

Official recognition of Yoshino village’s reform program came in 1919, with the Interior Ministry’s Regional Bureau Chief Soeda Keiichirō proclaiming that it was a ‘utopia’ (*risōkyō* 理想郷). Soeda also lauded Kitamura Denzaburō,

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69 ‘Kinen setuyaku yōmoku’ 「勤勉節約要目」, 1 February 1903, in *NSSS*: 25, pp. 676-677.
70 ‘Shinheimin buraku no mohan jigyō」 「新平民部落の模範事業」, *Fukuon Shinbun* 『福音新報』, 26 November 1903, in *KBSS*: 4, p. 142.
71 Hata 榊, ‘Mikata-gahara no kōmyō (parts 2 and 3)」 「三方が原の光明 中・下」, *Kyōiku Jiron 『教育時論』*, January and February 1904, in *KBSS*: 4, pp. 142-145.
72 ‘Jichitai no yoki mohan」 「自治体の好模範」, *Shichōson Zasshi 『市町村雑誌』*, July 1903, in *KBSS*: 4, p. 140.
who had been mayor since 1910, as its ‘good village head’ (*ryō sonchō* 良村長).  

The Justice Minister of the time, Ōgi Enkichi, came to visit in 1921, and he exhorted villagers not to rest on their laurels, but to ‘unite and cooperate even more’, proposing that ‘as a village develops, so too does the national culture progress’.

Few records exist of what residents thought about this campaign. One can speculate that the response may have resembled that accorded to the prefecture-wide campaign for thrift and industry in the mid-1880s. The *Shizuoka Daimu* newspaper reported then that confronted with exhortations for even greater efforts, ‘Villagers are universally unhappy [...] saying, “How can we study in our current circumstances? Thrift and frugality are our watchwords. We have no means to save money”’.

What effect reform and improvement had on social interaction between ‘new’ and ‘old’ commoners is also unclear, although there are suggestions that popular prejudices were not especially strong in this area. A 1919 report stated that reform programs had so improved the smaller ‘*buraku*’ settlements around Hamamatsu that their residents were not seen any differently to people of surrounding villages, with marriages between them having become common.

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73 Ōdo Jisaku 尾戸次作, ‘Mukashi ha nanson, ima ha risōkyō’ 「昔は難村今は理想郷」, *Shimin 『斯民』*, March 1919, in *KBSS*: 9, pp. 88-93.

74 ‘Yoshino mura ni okeru Ōgi hōsō’ 「吉野村に於ける大木法相」, *Shimin 『斯民』*, October 1921, in *KBSS*: 10, p. 102. Ōgi Enkichi, who lent moral support to the establishment of the *Teikoku Kōdōkai* by Ōe Taku in 1914, was the son of the celebrated Meiji bureaucrat and politician Ōgi Takatō.

75 ‘Gōshū Fuchi gun Asada mura no sono’ 「郷士淵ぐん浅田村のそん」, pp. 168-172.

76 Tōōmi Kubun Rōjin 遠江喜聞老人, ‘Kanzen ni yūwa saretaru buraku’ 「完全に融合されたる部落」, *Minzoku To Rekishi 『民族と歴史』*, July 1919, pp. 219-221.
By the 1930s, Miyoshi Iheiji wrote, most people had completely forgotten that those areas around Hamamatsu had once been 'buraku' areas.\(^77\)

At any rate, the Yoshino campaign, with its regime of mutual surveillance and secret denunciation, successfully created a village order that won official praise. Subsequent official encouragement and implementation of similar reform and improvement measures elsewhere reflects the fact that the Yoshino reform program, which was very efficient from the perspective of state concerns with order and economic productivity, attracted hundreds of observers, both official and private, from other parts of Japan.\(^78\)

**Towards an official response**

Although there were few signs of direct government interest in the problems of 'new commoners' during the first three decades of the Meiji period, as tangentially related issues such as mass poverty drew increasing official concern, that concern had the effect of stimulating a degree of interest in 'buraku' issues. Significant in this respect was the tendency that emerged during the 1890s to consider economic disparities between Japanese subjects as a 'social problem' and a policy matter rather than as an issue primarily concerning the defective morality of those who were poor.\(^79\)

Economic thinking associated with the German Social Policy Association (\textit{Verein für Sozialpolitik}), which had been founded in 1872, played an important


\(^{78}\) Shiraishi, 'Kaidai: Yoshino mura', p. 455.

role in this transition. Members of this organization advocated state reforms that would ‘preserve the existing economic and political system by domesticating the potentially dangerous forces of organized labour and creating a sense of common purpose amongst labour and management’. Their teachings found a considerable following in late-Meiji Japan. As Morris-Suzuki has observed, the Meiji state actively intervened to promote industrialization, and the rapidity of change intensified social dislocation. Japan’s economic trajectory thus resembled that previously taken by Germany. Learning from the German experience, Japanese scholars and bureaucrats perceived benefits in adopting German style social policies to deal with that social dislocation. Social policy also meshed neatly with Edo-period Confucian teachings about it being the moral duty of rulers to govern benevolently and secure the welfare of the people (keikoku saimin 経国濟民).

Through his introduction of social policy into Japanese intellectual circles, a Tokyo University academic named Kanai Noburu (1865-1933) played a central role in bringing about this shift in attitudes towards economic inequality. Having studied social policy in Germany from 1886 until 1890, on his return to Japan, Kanai set about publicizing the teachings of that school of economic thought. In his words, ‘Social policy basically plans conciliation of all social classes at home, and thereby attempts to bring about a perfect unity of the entire

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nation. The highest goal of social policy is to bring classes together in mutually supporting and helping roles'.

Such ideas inspired several students and recent graduates of Tokyo University, and notably Kuwada Kumazō, to create the Social Policy Study Group (Shakai Seisaku no Kenkyūkai 社会政策の研究会) in April 1896. Renamed the Social Policy Association (Shakai Seisaku Gakkai 社会政策学会) in April 1897, members drafted a statement of intent (shuisho 趣意書) in which they expressed opposition not just to laissez faire economic policies, which in their view magnified economic disparities, but also to socialism, which they considered would lead to the destruction of the existing economic system.

The establishment of the Association for the Study of Poor People (Hinmin Kenkyūkai 貧民研究会) in 1900 was one expression of the spreading influence of social policy teachings. This group's membership consisted primarily of young bureaucrats, and included Kuwada Kumazō, as well as the future police official and 'buraku' reformer, Arimatsu Hideyoshi (1863-1927), the reformer of 'buraku' residents and misguided youth, Tomeoka Kōsuke (1864-1934), the future reformer of the prison system, Ogawa Shigejirō (1862-1925, incidentally, Ogawa's thoughts on prisons became influential in early-

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83 Born in Tottori prefecture, Kuwada graduated from Tokyo University's Law Faculty in 1893 (having studied under Kanai Noburu), spent two years studying 'social problems' in Europe, and returned to teach at Tokyo and Chūō Universities. Of wealthy family, the amount of tax he paid entitled him to a seat in the House of Peers from 1904 to 1918. Kuwada was personally interested in 'slums' and 'buraku' affairs, and accompanied Yanase Keisuke in his visits to such areas in Tokyo during the late 1880s and early 1890s. See Yokoyama Gennosuke 横山源之助, 'Kuwada Kumazō shi to sono naijo '桑田熊藏氏とその内助'', in *Yokoyama Gennosuke zenshū*, vol. 3 『横山源之助全集 第3巻』(東京: 明治文献, 1974), pp. 591-594.

twentieth century China), the future social and charitable projects specialist, Aida Yoshio, and the prominent bureaucrat and politician, Inoue Tomoichi (1871-1919). The rising generation of Interior Ministry officials evidently saw a need to undertake concrete studies into phenomena associated with economic disparity and social disharmony.

Aida acted as the secretary for the inaugural meeting of this group in September 1900, which was attended among others by Kuwada, Arimatsu, Ogawa, and also Tomeoka. What they discussed and studied is unclear, although in light of their later activities, one might guess that they touched upon both ‘slum’- and ‘buraku’-related issues. This early interest extended to a degree of concrete field study, with Inoue Tomoichi, the Interior Ministry Secretary of the time, directing Tomeoka to survey ‘social projects’ (shakai jigyō 社会事業) in Tokyo in 1901.

Tomeoka Kōsuke, who was to prove a key figure in late-Meiji and Taisho-period social policy and social projects, was the adopted son of a rice merchant. According to his own account, as a child he had been weak-bodied and acquired a great dislike of the overbearing manners of the former military classes. Attracted by Christian teachings of human equality, he chose to be baptised in his late teens under the influence of the Okayama priest and later ‘buraku’ reformer, Kanamori Michitomo.

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However, Tomeoka’s interest in society’s lower strata appears to have developed from a concern with law and order as much as with social justice. His first encounter with the ‘buraku’ issue, he said, came when he was the pastor of a Hokkaido prison. Tomeoka claimed that an overwhelming number of prisoners had been ‘buraku’ residents, and recalled thinking that ‘in order to reduce crime in this country, it was utterly necessary to improve and reform tokushu buraku’. The reduction of crime, he stated, was vital for the development of cities, towns and villages, for the progress of Japan and of the Japanese empire.\(^{88}\)

In March and April of 1903, Aida and Tomeoka went together on a ‘social projects’ study tour of five central and western prefectures: Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, Mie and Aichi. This involved visiting actual ‘project sites’ (genba 現場)—whatever these may have been—and inspecting conditions in factories, brothels, prisons, ‘slums’, schools, temples, libraries, ‘buraku’ communities, and doss-houses. Aida’s report on their activities was presented to the Interior Ministry,\(^{89}\) whose officials were clearly inclining towards the implementation of ‘social policies’ of some description.

Out of this series of discussions, studies and reports emerged the first official ‘buraku’ reform measures in 1905. In that year, the new Mie prefecture governor, Arimatsu Hideyoshi, decided to commence reforming ‘buraku’ communities. He employed a Christian entrepreneur by the name of Takeba Toraichirō to design a concrete reform program, and Tomeoka Kōsuke also appears to have offered occasional assistance.

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\(^{88}\) Tomeoka Kōsuke 留岡幸助, ‘Saimin buraku kaizen no gaiyō’ 「細民部落改善の概要」, Keisatsu Kyōkai Zasshi 『警察協会雑誌』, June 1912, in KBSS: 5, pp. 61-62, 65-67. His claim that overwhelming numbers were ‘buraku’ residents is nonsense; Tomeoka revised that statement somewhat in his autobiography. See Tomeoka, Jijo, p. 10.

\(^{89}\) Aida, ‘Namiki no shita’, pp. 804-805.
Arimatsu was an elite Meiji bureaucrat. Born in Okayama, he first trained to be a teacher, and graduated from Okayama Normal School in 1881. Ambitious, he quickly moved to Tokyo, where he attended the German Studies Association School. Upon graduation, he passed the elite civil service examination—the first private school student to do so—and commenced life as a bureaucrat. To outline merely his Meiji-period career, he first worked as a legal official in Mito, before becoming Justice Ministry Councillor, Agriculture and Trade Ministry Councillor, Interior Ministry Secretary, Interior Ministry Police Bureau Chief, and then Mie prefecture governor in 1904. He returned to the position of Police Bureau Chief in 1908, and became a member of the House of Peers in 1911. He also drafted the repressive 1900 Police Peace Law (Chian Keisatsu Hō 治安警察法) that was designed to counter workers’ strikes and tenancy disputes, and the Administrative Procedures Law. Arimatsu’s primary professional concern was with law and order.

Although the nature and extent of his involvement with the Association for the Study of Poor People is uncertain, his law and order focus was at the base of his concern with ‘buraku’ matters. The Chūgai Nippō reported that when Arimatsu first came to Mie prefecture, he visited each police station and police officers gave him the impression that ‘new commoners’ committed a disproportionately large number of crimes. Arimatsu reportedly ‘kept this in mind from the perspective of prefectural government’. He also spoke directly to ‘buraku’ residents of a Watarai district village in October 1906 about his concern with their rate of criminality. Having first deplored the fact that people

91 ‘Tokushu buraku to kirisuto kyojō/ bokushi no kenshinteki dendo’ 特殊部落と基教／基教の献身的伝道’, Chūgai Nippō 中外日報, 8 December 1908, in KBSS: 4, p. 149.
denigrated them despite their performance of national duties, he went on to add that residents needed to curb their criminal inclinations.92

With the aim of crime reduction through ‘buraku’ reform in mind, Arimatsu decided to call on the assistance of his acquaintance, Takeba Toraichirō. Arimatsu’s selection of Takeba turned out to be a controversial decision that came under attack in the prefectural assembly, as some thought it inappropriate for the governor to employ a Christian in the prefecture that was home to the sacred Ise shrines.93

Takeba (1863-1927), the son of rich Ehime prefecture landowners, had been baptised in 1899. After moving to Tokyo and becoming a wealthy tobacco entrepreneur, his desire to contribute to society—aroused by the Freedom and Popular Rights movement in his native Ehime—is reported to have strengthened, and led to his becoming a Christian. His good works commenced in 1901, when he met by chance a Mie prefecture merchant who aroused his sympathy for a group of peasants whose land had been expropriated for public works purposes. Taking up their cause, Takeba made representations to the Agriculture Ministry, the Forests Bureau, and the Mie prefecture headquarters, with some official relief measures said to have followed in early 1905. He also had some interest in ‘buraku’ matters, having at one time planned to build a school in a Tokyo ‘buraku’ area. The fact that he was related by marriage to the well-known ‘buraku’ rights advocate Ōe Taku (their wives were sisters), as well as his links

92 See Kurokawa Midori 黒川みどり, Ika to dōka no hazama—hisabetsu buraku ninshiki no kiseki 『異化と同化の間—被差別部落認識の軌跡』 (東京：青木書店, 1999), p. 75.
93 Mie Ken 三重県, ‘Tokushu buraku kaizen no kōgai’ 『特殊部落改善の梗概』, 1907, in MKBS, p. 43. What ‘buraku’ residents thought about Takeba is unknown, but there was an interesting report from Kanagawa a few years earlier about a Christian evangelist who had tried to establish a school for ‘buraku’ children: parents reportedly loath to entrust their offspring to reputedly blood-drinking Christians. Yasue Takeo 安枝武雄, ‘Shōyū gikai undō ippan’ 『招友議会運動一斑』, Nichiyō Sōshi 『日曜叢誌』, May 1895, in KBSS: 4, pp. 128-129.
with Nakae Chōmin, may well have been factors in that interest. At any rate, Takeba accepted Arimatsu’s offer of employment, and ‘buraku’ reform activities thereafter occupied not just his public life, but also his private life, as eight young ‘new commoners’ resided in his house in the city of Tsu, with Takeba taking care of their education and employment.

According to the official Mie prefecture record detailing early ‘buraku’ reform measures, Arimatsu and Takeba commenced their work from the standpoint that people despised ‘new commoners’ because their customs and occupations were lowly. Asserting the importance of acquiring accurate data in order to set about ‘improving their customs and changing their occupations so as to enable them to mix with ordinary people’, Designated Investigator (Sennin Chōsain 専任調査員) Takeba set off in June of 1905 to examine the everyday lives of the prefecture’s ‘buraku’ residents. Looking at ancestry, population numbers, occupations, customs, sexual practices, living conditions, education and hygiene, he completed his study in 1906, and that report was made public in 1907.

Upon completion of his field study, Takeba took on the job of Charity and Salvation Officer (Jikei Kyūsaiin 慈恵救済員), which entailed the implementation of practical reform measures. According to one newspaper reporter’s description, Takeba ‘taught humanity and industry [...] became

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94 Kurokawa, Ika to dōka, pp. 74-75. See also Okiura Kazuteru 沖浦和光, ‘Kaisetsu: Suihei hito no yo ni hikari are’ 「解説: 水平人の世に光あれ」, in SHYH, pp. 301-302.
96 Tomeoka, ‘Shinheimin no kaizen’, p. 59.
97 This text was the Mie prefecture, ‘Tokushu buraku kaizen no kōgai’, frequently cited above, reproduced in MKBS, pp. 43-49.
friendly, ate and slept with them, spoke to them of history, encouraged their participation in productive works [...] told of the necessity of hygiene, and in the end touched even [the minds of] these obstinate beings.'

More exactly, Takeba encouraged people to meet stricter behavioural standards. The official report records, 'Under the prefecture's [i.e. Takeba's] guidance, all buraku have adopted village codes, and the youths of large buraku have joined together to reform and improve both themselves and others.' Takeba also promoted the formation of youth and women's associations to enforce such codes of conduct.

Community codes of conduct were a core tool of official reform in Mie, just as they had been in autonomous reform in Yoshino. To an extent, officials were able to draw on existing village accords such as the Yagawa (Suzutome village) accord that had been drafted in 1889. Implemented after three 'buraku' communities had merged in the course of administrative reforms, it was probably designed to prevent problems from arising during that process. Its stated aim was to promote 'the sloughing of errant ways, thereby to reform people's minds and heighten their sense of morality'. The concrete measures that were to help achieve this were everyday actions such as carrying night soil out of the village (Article six), renouncing 'dirty' (fuketsu 不潔) occupations (Article seven), cleaning inside the home at least once a day (Article eight), and engaging in leather and meat trades only in places outside the community where smell and lack of hygiene would not pose a problem (Article seventeen). Infringements of

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100 Takeba Toraichirō 竹葉寅一郎, in ‘Saimin buraku kaizen kyōgikai sokkōroku’ 『細民部落改善協議会速記録』, 9 November 1912, in KBSS: 5, pp. 151-152.
101 Kurokawa, Ika to dōka, pp. 58-59.
these regulations were to be met by fines of between fifteen sen and three yen (Article twenty-six).\(^{102}\)

Local elites of a village in what is today Kuwana city had drafted and imposed a similar accord on residents in 1904. This set of regulations directed residents to refrain from activities that could damage the standing of the community in the eyes of others. Those who transgressed these rules were to be banished from the village.\(^{103}\)

With official supervision, such village codes became more widespread and acquired increased authority. Takeba supervised the drafting of a code for Anō district's Tōse village (now part of the city of Tsu), and presumably was involved in the drafting of others. Typical of those seen in the prefecture, this Tōse village code required that people dress neatly, use polite language, and speak only in standard Japanese. It stipulated that people should clean inside and outside their homes twice a day. A disciplining committee was to deal with infringements, and three offences were to be met with a period of ostracism.\(^{104}\)

The Hidetora Association—its name made up of the first two letters of the given names of Arimatsu and Takeba—was another Mie institution that these two men inspired. Gathering men aged between seventeen and twenty-five, it aimed to foster morality, correct customs, encourage education, and promote hard work, thrift, and savings.\(^{105}\) Members also greeted and saw off conscripts at the local station, and conducted hygiene inspections of village residences.\(^{106}\)

\(^{102}\) ‘Kiyakusho’ 「規約書」, 1889, in MKBS, pp. 36-37.
\(^{103}\) ‘Kiyakusho’ 「規約書」, August 1904, in MKBS, pp. 39-40.
\(^{104}\) ‘Mōshiai kiyaku’ 「甲合規約」, 1 September 1905, in MKBS, pp. 46-47.
\(^{105}\) ‘Hidetorakai kaisoku’ 「英黄会会則」, in MKBS, pp. 47-48.
\(^{106}\) Nara ken 奈良県, ‘Dai ikkai kangai kyōfu jimushitsu hōkokusho (excerpt)’ 「第一回管外矯風事務視察報告書（抄件）」, Meiji No Hikari 『明治之光』, April, September and October 1917, in KBSS: 6, pp. 144-148.
In the case of this Mie campaign too, the opinions and actions of those targeted by these reform measures are largely unknown, although Kurokawa Midori suggests that the people of Yagawa, remembering the onerous nature of the village accord imposed upon them in 1889, violently opposed the attempted drafting of a new village code in 1909.\(^{107}\) In contrast, external commentators reacted positively. The *Ise Shinbun* published a report on Mie’s ‘*buraku*’ reform program in 1910 that praised the development of industry and the improved rates of education and savings. It also noted that the crime rate was below that for ‘ordinary’ people.\(^{108}\) Such successes led the *Mie Shinbun* to publish a series on Mie’s ‘*buraku*’ communities subtitled, ‘Appearance transformed, evil ways swept away / a stream of model good people emerge’.\(^{109}\) These gratifying results, hoped Tomeoka Kōsuke, would provide a model for other prefectures.\(^{110}\)

In effect, part of the significance of the Mie program lay in the fact that officials from other prefectures perceived it to have been a success, and imitated it.\(^{111}\) Kurosawa Seiichi, who worked with Takeba and Arimatsu, went on to join the Wakayama prefecture police and conduct similar projects there.\(^{112}\) Kurosawa no doubt cooperated with Yoshida Minoru, the head of the Wakayama prefecture police, who also went to Mie to study ‘*buraku*’ reform.\(^{113}\) In formulating their

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\(^{109}\) ‘Kenka tokushu buraku no hattatsu / menboku isshin akushū issō / mohanteki ryōmin zokushutsu su’「県下特殊部落の発達／面目一新悪習一掃／模範的良民続出す」, *Mie Shinbun* 『三重新聞』, 3 July 1911, in *KBSS*: 5, pp. 208-209.

\(^{110}\) Tomeoka, ‘Shinheimin no kaizen’, p. 60.

\(^{111}\) Kurokawa, *Ika to dōka*, pp. 80-81.

\(^{112}\) Tomeoka, ‘Saimin buraku kaizen’, p. 62.

policies, Nara officials conducted a survey of ‘buraku’ reform programs elsewhere, including notably Shizuoka’s Yoshino village program and the Mie program.\textsuperscript{114} Led by the police officer Yoshimura Michiru, a number of Kyoto officials likewise learnt from the precedents set by the Mie prefecture campaign in establishing the Yanagihara Association for Moral Correction.\textsuperscript{115} Such prefectural interest, as we shall see below, was to a large degree stimulated by the state.

** Reform and the state 

Although policy-makers directed increasing attention at social issues during the 1890s, and particularly after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895,\textsuperscript{116} it was after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 that social issues emerged as one of the principal subjects of public debate and policy.\textsuperscript{117} Despite having been victorious in the two wars against China and then Russia, and having gained considerable colonial territory and financial ‘reparations’, the costs of war and empire placed considerable strain on Japanese state finances. As this strain tended to be passed on to the population, it helped provoke considerable social unrest. Officials responded with measures intended to revitalize the national economy and reinforce national integration.

Collectively, these measures are known as the Local (or Regional) Improvement Campaign (\textit{Chiho Kairyō Undō 地方改良運動}). Designed 'to

\textsuperscript{114} Nara ken, ‘Dai ikkai kangai kyōfu jimū’, pp. 144-148.
\textsuperscript{115} ‘Yanagihara chō no kaizen’ [柳原町の改善], \textit{Asahi Shinbun} (Kyoto edition) 《朝日新聞》(京都版), 6 June 1908, in KBSS: 4, pp. 178-179.
overcome the disintegrative effects of industrialization, to create national loyalties among all classes of people at the local level, and thus to promote further economic development', that campaign consisted of measures designed to rationalize local administration, as well as to encourage the establishment and development of state-directed organizations at a local level (principally women’s, youths’ and returned soldiers’ groups), with an eye to creating and maintaining a national society amenable to general mobilization.118

As part of this broader campaign, government figures moved to establish semi-official Hōtoku Associations (Hōtokusha 報徳社) in 1906. These took their name from the philosophy of Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856), who became famous in the late-Edo period for his successes in reviving ailing village economies. Sontoku’s teachings, which had much in common with ‘conventional morality’, stressed moral and practical ways to improve rural life, including the improvement of crop strains and the practice of industry, thrift, and mutual aid (the term ‘hōtoku’ meant something like, ‘return your blessings in order to prosper’). In his words, ‘Buddhism teaches transmigration [...] Confucius teaches us to obey the will of heaven and thus live a life of peace. My teaching is different, it is intended to enrich the poor and give prosperity to those who need it.’119

Organizations that took his teachings as their guiding principles operated in the Kantō area during the early-to-mid-Meiji years, most notably in Shizuoka, where they presumably had some influence upon the above-mentioned Yoshino

Like labour and credit cooperatives, they brought members to pool their resources, thereby enabling bulk acquisitions and sales as well as loans to members in need, and also promoted thrift, industry, and practical improvements.

The establishment of semi-official ‘Hōtoku’ organizations in 1906 reflected the official belief that Sontoku’s thought would prove useful in promoting the moral education of regional residents. In part, this perception of utility sprang from Sontoku’s political conservatism: he had taught that ‘the best way to live was by industrious participation in the established order’. Another significant reason for this decision was more directly related to the government’s desire to mobilize the lower social strata. As the government ideologue Inoue Tetsujirō (1855-1944) related to Tomeoka Kōsuke, the Meiji regime prominently featured Sontoku in school textbooks because Sontoku had become renowned for his contributions to society despite his humble beginnings in an impoverished peasant household. Inoue explained that Education Ministry officials had been engaged in a search for a suitable national hero to promote patriotic thought and action among the country’s youth. They selected Sontoku in preference to other more martial heroes of Japanese history because Sontoku was best suited to the government’s desire to make it clear to poor children that even they could

120 Havens, *Farm and nation*, pp. 41-44.
embody the principles of loyalty and patriotism, as they held Sontoku to have done.  

Shimin (斯民), the Hōtoku Association’s official journal, frequently reported on ‘buraku’ improvement campaigns. From the organization’s inception, it was clear that ‘buraku’ reform was a priority, with the Interior Ministry Secretary, Nakagawa Nozomu, addressing an early assembly on the need for ‘burakumin’ to be imbued with self-confidence and imparted a desire for improvement and progress. Among the practical means that he proposed for doing so were such measures as constructing public baths, digging wells, and undertaking housing improvements.

Official interest in the ‘buraku problem’ was also manifest in the fact that in 1907, the Interior Ministry ordered the prefectural authorities to conduct a survey of the country’s ‘buraku’ communities. It also began encouraging prefectural ‘buraku’ reform activities.

Along with Nakagawa, Namee Takayuki and Tomeoka Kōsuke were among the more prominent Interior Ministry officials involved in Hōtoku Association activities. Their work involved travelling the country giving speeches on ‘hōtoku’ teachings. For instance, Tomeoka surveyed Kyoto city’s ‘buraku’ communities in 1908, and gave a speech on Ninomiya Sontoku at the

125 ‘Honkai no reikai’ 「本会の例会」, Shinmin 『斯民』, July 1906, in KBSS: 4, pp. 53-55.
Amabe night school, which was attended mainly by ‘buraku’ residents who worked during the day.\textsuperscript{127}

Officially-directed attempts to foster patriotic sentiment and promote productive activities among society’s lower strata were echoed in popular literature, as novelists called for men of virtue and talent to dedicate themselves to local reform. In 1907, the Doya newspaper published a story entitled ‘Model village headman’ by the author Tanaka Tōyō (1880-1941).\textsuperscript{128} Clearly a product of the Local Improvement Campaign, and reflecting the importance placed by socio-political elites on reforming popular lifestyle, Tanaka’s work featured a graduate of a Tokyo university who had been forced to abandon teaching because of a nervous disorder. Returning to his native village with his wife, he found the community suffering from a lack of leadership and riven by conflict between ‘buraku’ and other residents. From a long line of village headmen, the hero took on that function, and treated ‘buraku’ residents with such fairness and friendship that his less progressive-minded wife left him. Subsequently, ‘the main character obtains the trust of the villagers by [...] dedicating himself to village affairs and improving the village economy’. When conflict erupts between ‘buraku’ and other residents, he moderates the situation by marrying a ‘buraku’ girl.\textsuperscript{129} Presenting the social reformer as a virtuous self-sacrificing hero,\textsuperscript{127} ‘Toneoka Kōsuke shi no junshi’ [留岡幸助氏の巡視], \textit{Hinode Shinbun} [日出新聞], 19 January 1908, in \textit{KNBS}: 7, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{128} Tanaka Tōyō 田中桃葉, ‘Mohan sonchō’ [模範村長], 1907, in \textit{BMBS}: 37.

\textsuperscript{129} Hirano Hidehisa 平野栄久, ‘Taishū bungei no isō yori mita sabetsu’ [大衆文芸の位相よりみた差別], in Umesawa Toshihiko \textit{et al.} 梅沢利彦ほか著, \textit{Bungaku no naka no hisabetsu burakuzō}, senzen hen [文学の中の被差別部落像 戦前編] (東京: 明石書店, 1980), pp. 66-67. Perhaps Tanaka found inspiration in Nakamura Shun’u’s 1900 short story ‘Eta village’, which has a virtually identical plotline. In Nakamura’s story, a Christian evangelist enters into the perilous village ‘separated from the rest of humanity’ that the title refers to. Unable to stand living there, his wife leaves him. Miyata remains, marries a ‘buraku’ girl and successfully engages in reform and education practices. Nakamura Shun’u 中村春雨, ‘Eta mura’ [樫多村].
this novel echoed the state’s desire to reinvigorate the regions through good leadership. Explicitly appealing for young men of virtue and talent to act for the common good by practicing local reform in the regions, this work represented ‘buraku’ reform and improvement as a patriotic activity of great social and national merit.\(^{130}\)

In 1908, initiatives taken by a new cabinet led by Katsura Tarō in his second stint as prime minister bolstered official reform and improvement activities of a concrete kind. Katsura’s cabinet announced a twelve-point policy plan. Reflecting the kinds of ideas expressed by proponents of social policy since the 1890s, the sixth article on Internal Affairs (Naimu 内務) noted that the development of industry and competition had exacerbated economic divisions between the people. Warning of socialism’s potential dangers, the text’s authors went on to announce that the second Katsura cabinet, as it is now called,\(^{131}\) would assure state order and foster economic growth ‘by implementing so-called social policies’.\(^{132}\)

The establishment in September 1908 of the ‘Salvation Projects Study Group’ (Kyūsai Jigyō Kenkyūkai 救済事業研究会) under the Interior Ministry’s

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130 Writing about the heroism of reformers constituted a minor literary genre. Writing in Shimin, Nagaoka Ryūichirō (1884-1963) of the Wakayama prefecture police force related the reform mission undertaken by one of his subordinates in this style. An officer and his family had ventured into a ‘buraku’ community to reform the residents. There, despite many problems evoked in terms such as ‘peculiarly buraku dialect’, ‘peculiarly bad buraku customs’, and the ‘peculiarly buraku stench’, Nagaoka reported that the mission ended successfully, with the officer so thoroughly gaining the trust and obeisance of residents that the Interior Ministry rewarded the community with the status of a ‘model village’. Nagaoka Ryūichirō 長岡隆一郎, ‘Saimin buraku kaizen no tame katei wo gisei to seru junsa’ 「細民部落改善の為め家庭を給与とせる巡査」, Shimin 『斯民』, June 1914, in KBSS: 6, pp. 212-214.

131 Katsura’s first period as prime minister (from June 1901 to January 1906), and his second (from July 1908 to August 1911) sandwiched Saionji Kinmochi’s government, which was fiercely criticized for not cracking down hard enough upon socialism and for its inability to invigorate the post-war economy.

auspices was a further indication of that expanding official concern with ‘social’ issues. This group convened at Tokyo’s Kokugakuin University over a period of thirty-six days, during which time Tomeoka Kōsuke also held discussions on the ‘buraku’ problem with delegates at his nearby home. Soon afterwards, Tomeoka became chair of the ‘Tokushu Buraku Study Group’ (Tokushu Buraku Kenkyūkai 特殊部落研究会) that was set up within the Interior Ministry (this organization’s activities are obscure).  

In October 1908, reform activities were further invigorated as the government had Mutsuhito promulgate the Boshin Rescript. The monarch’s speechwriters had him declare, ‘the war has just ended, and we must all tighten our belts. High and low united as one, we must labour faithfully, practice industry, thrift and savings […] shun extravagance, and denounce idleness’.  

In response to the announcement of this text, ‘organizations for moral correction and the promotion of thrift, industry and savings were formed all over the country, mobilizing youths and women to publicize and implement those aims’. The rescript also gave impetus to concrete programs directed specifically at ‘buraku’ communities, which, despite increasing talk about reform and Interior Ministry encouragement of prefectural reform activities, had generally yet to be implemented.

There emerged a marked trend for prefectural governments to introduce concrete measures to deal with the ‘buraku problem’ subsequent to the

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announcement of the *Boshin* Rescript. For instance, on receiving the rescript, Izawa Takio (1869-1949), then governor of Wakayama, proclaimed that ‘buraku improvement requires even greater efforts’, presaging an increased official effort that involved creating reform groups to promote local economic development and education. Concrete programs to introduce secondary occupations (rope-making at night, for example) were implemented, communal savings were encouraged, and the interest on them was used to pay taxes and communal duties. Youth associations, returned servicemen’s associations and fire-fighting groups assisted these operations.\(^\text{136}\) In Okayama too, ‘buraku’ reform movements of an official nature developed rapidly under the influence of the Regional Improvement Campaign and the Boshin Rescript.\(^\text{137}\) There, as elsewhere, the police appear to have played a central role. In 1911, the *Sanyō Shinpō* newspaper quoted a statement by the governor, Taniguchi Tomegorō, on ‘buraku’ reform. ‘Each time I meet with district and city heads and police chiefs, I bring their attention to the importance of the reform of tokushu buraku […] Not a few are reformed and progressing’.\(^\text{138}\) ‘Buraku’ reform organizations in Tokushima prefecture also match this pattern. In March 1909, district heads delivered to each town and village within their jurisdiction a note on the significance of the *Boshin* Rescript, and how to realize its aims. This note contained some thirty-eight provisions, and listed ‘buraku’ reform programs among them. In

\(^{136}\) An overview of ‘buraku’ reform in Wakayama can be found in Oda, ‘Atarashi minshūzō’, pp. 286-289.


subsequent years, reform organizations mushroomed. Shimane prefecture officials began ‘buraku’ surveys in the late-Meiji period, and implemented reform measures around 1910.

Reinforcing prefectoral initiatives, the central government took further concrete steps towards ‘buraku’ reform in the wake of the Great Treason Incident (Daigyaku Jiken 大逆事件) of 1911. The rumoured involvement of ‘buraku’ elements in an alleged plot to assassinate the emperor caused political concern. Sensational media treatments of the events surrounding this supposed conspiracy helped spread the notion that the backward and marginal parts of society had to be led towards progress and development to forestall any repetition of such incidents. The Interior Ministry official, Tokonami Takejirō (1867-1935), for example, declared during budget deliberations that, ‘You all know just how inferior they [‘burakumin’] are from the perspectives of hygiene, education, morals, and so on. I propose that we deal with this and reform them’.

Shortly afterwards, the ‘Pauper Buraku Survey Group’ (Hinmin Buraku Chōsakai 貧民部落調査会) was established around the Interior Ministry’s Regional Bureau Chief Tokonami Takejirō, the Police Bureau Chief Arimatsu Hideyoshi, the Head of Shrines Inoue Tomoichi, and the Cabinet Councillor Nakagawa Nozomu. These policy experts determined that firstly, another survey

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141 The extent of ‘buraku’ involvement appears to have been limited to the point that two ‘buraku’ residents were apparently acquainted with two others who were suspected of having thought about assassinating the emperor.
142 ‘Shūgiin giji sokkirono’「衆議院議事速記録」, February 1911, in KNBS: 7, p. 19.
143 ‘Hinmin buraku’ was a temporary compromise that resulted from protests over the official use of the derogatory term ‘tokushu buraku’.
of actual ‘buraku’ living conditions was necessary. Consequently, in mid-1911, they sent out Interior Ministry Commissaires *(Naimushō Shokutaku* 内務省嘱託), among them Tomeoka Kōsuke, Namae Takayuki and Kanamori Michitomo, to investigate the country’s ‘buraku’ communities.\(^\text{144}\) The results were made public at the 1912 conference on ‘pauper buraku’, and a central government budget dedicated to ‘buraku’ affairs was established that same year. At this point, however, that budget was used only to provide financial rewards for model ‘buraku’ communities.\(^\text{145}\)

Incidentally, as government involvement in ‘buraku’ reform deepened during the early-twentieth century, internally generated ‘buraku’ reform campaigns were foundering. ‘From the end of the Meiji period into the Taisho period, village elites centred around the Edo-period village heads streamed out of *buraku* communities. Consequently, [...] the *buraku* improvement campaigns that they had conducted rapidly declined’.\(^\text{146}\) To a degree, the state took up the resulting slack, although this is not to say that there was a direct relationship between these processes. Fundamentally, growing state involvement in ‘buraku’ reform, and especially the stress on using returned soldiers’ groups, women’s groups, children’s groups and youth groups as agents of moral correction and lifestyle reform, was part of the overall state effort to realize a unified national society amenable to general mobilization.

\(^\text{144}\) Shiraishi, ‘Yanagihara chō to buraku kaizen undo’.
\(^\text{145}\) Taikakai (ed.), *Naimushō shi*, vol. 3, pp. 381–382.
The ambiguity of reform

During the latter part of the Meiji period, the lives of most ‘buraku’ residents were probably affected to some extent by reform and improvement campaigns. But at least some people were decidedly reluctant participants. Ariizumi Sadao reported that in Nara prefecture, the use of the police to conduct household hygiene inspections and impose fines on families deemed to be unsatisfactory provoked considerable ire.\(^{147}\) Sumii Sué’s epic series, ‘The river with no bridge’, which in fact is set in a rural district of Nara, contains a scene where gubernatorial exhortations for increased levels of thrift and industry during a reading of the Boshin Rescript arouse resentment towards the emperor, who clearly has no inkling of ‘buraku’ residents’ struggle to survive.\(^{148}\) Okamoto Wataru records that the failure of reform efforts to improve social relations with others gave rise to considerable resentment, which presumably was directed towards those who had promoted the practice of reform.\(^{149}\)

Even so, powerful factors drove ‘buraku’ residents to participate in reform programs. On the one hand, people were drawn into participating by the prospect of creating a better future in which they would not be subjected to popular prejudices. Reports concerning language reform clearly illustrate this point.

The major premise of ‘buraku’ reform campaigns was that ‘buraku’ residents were ‘deficient’ in a variety of specific ways and needed to rectify their ‘deficiencies’ in order to negate social prejudices. One point commentators continually complained about was the need for ‘burakumin’ to speak standard

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\(^{149}\) See Okamoto Wataru 岡本弥, Tokushu buraku no kaihō 『特殊部落の解放』(東京: 警醒社, 1921), p. 10.
Japanese. For example, in 1908, the authorities of Hyōgo prefecture’s Ibo district published a local development plan that detailed the concrete ways in which ‘buraku’ residents’ speech was defective. Their linguistic faults, said to include slurring words, speaking too fast, and using local terms to distinguish between villagers and others, were deemed to be the same as those manifested by ‘lowly people’ (katō jinmin 下等人民) of ordinary communities. Nonetheless, a local ‘enlightenment organization’ (keihatsu kikan 啓発機関), the report noted, was to ‘distribute to each buraku house a language chart comparing their speech to that of ordinary people’.

How local residents reacted to this attempt to stigmatise their everyday linguistic practices with reference to the putative linguistic correctness of ‘ordinary people’ is unknown. But in 1911, the Interior Ministry Commissaire Kanamori Michitomo reported from Mie prefecture on a similar phenomenon. ‘Because they [‘burakumin’] originally had greatly different language and mannerisms, they attentively study the behaviour of ordinary people, and imitate

150 Language followed closely after descent in terms of significance in the hierarchy of national capital. As one prominent intellectual proclaimed at the Philosophical Institute, ‘just as blood reveals one’s physical brethren, so does language reveal one’s psychological brethren [...] the Japanese language is the psychological blood of Japanese people’. Ueda Mannen 上田万年, ‘Kokugo to kokka to’ 「国語と国家と」, 8 October 1894, in Hisamatsu Senichi (ed.) 久松潜一編, Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 44, Ueda Mannen / Haga Yaichi shū 『明治文学全集 第44卷 芳賀矢一・上田万年集』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1968), p. 110. With regard to linguistic differences, although it is clear that ‘buraku’ communities often used specific terms to distinguish between themselves and others, it is not at all obvious that their language differed from that of neighboring communities. See, for example, Yanase Keisuke 柳瀬敬介, ‘Shakaigai no shakai, eta hinin’ 「社会外の社会＝極多非人」, in Yoshino Sakuzō (ed.) 吉野作造編, Meiji bunka zenshū, vol. 21, Shakai hen 『明治文化全集 第21巻 社会篇』 (東京: 日本評論社, 1928), pp. 141-142. No doubt many linguistic differences were discovered by reformers from elsewhere simply because of unfamiliarity with regional accents and dialects.


them'. Here too, critics had evidently indicated to residents that defective speech was one of the concrete deficiencies that prevented them from enjoying regular social relations with others, and driven them to attempt to re-model their own daily speech in order to rectify that situation.

A similar logic was evident in material reform programs. Critics suggested that sub-standard living conditions caused popular denigration, and brought people to undertake concrete measures to remedy them. An Ehime prefecture report on ‘buraku’ reform detailed the positive outcomes of various local and prefectural improvement campaigns, listing how they had improved local infrastructure, revived the local economy, constructed public baths, dug new wells and improved hygiene standards. As the report mentioned, all these achievements reduced the scope for mainstream people to target concrete ‘buraku’ deficiencies.154

Widespread participation in ‘buraku’ reform programs also reflected the fact that such campaigns were run by local elites with police and other official support, and had the authority afforded by village codes of conduct that used fines and ostracism to counter non-compliance with requisite standards. Furthermore, the alleged deficiencies of ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ were susceptible to representation as problems that retarded national progress and development. From such a perspective, commentators could proclaim that it was the patriotic duty of ‘new commoners’ and ‘burakumin’ to fit themselves to the

153 Kanamori Michitomo 金森通倫. ‘Chōsasho no hikae’ 「調査書の控」, 5 October 1911, in MKBS, pp. 95-99.
154 ‘Ehime ken kanka kyūsai jigyō narabini buraku kaizen jiseki gaïyō (excerpts)’ 「愛媛県化教済事業並部落改善事業録要 (抄件)」, March 1917, in KBSS: 6, pp. 384-387. No doubt the primary motivation in concrete activities such as these was a desire to enjoy the tangible benefits of such facilities.
mould of national subjects. As one Ehime newspaper put it, 'If you are Japanese commoners [...] you must act the part'.

This aspect of reform was visible in the practice of moral improvement. In his report concerning reform in Nara prefecture’s South Katsuragi district, Ohara Shinzō reported that daily public readings of the Boshin Rescript and the Rescript on Education had succeeded in making people give up daytime naps and begin working at night. Apart from that, residents had also established a returned servicemen’s club, and twice a month, former servicemen engaged in military training, striving to polish themselves and maintain a soldierly bearing in life.

Although the degree to which these activities resulted from official coercion is unclear, this kind of reform obviously worked to raise economic productivity, and to reinforce daily lifestyle discipline, thereby tending to cement the position of ‘buraku’ residents as proper Japanese subjects.

However, in terms of improving the economic situation of ‘buraku’ communities, and in terms of eliminating popular prejudices, reform and improvement programs do not appear to have been particularly successful. The reasons why discrimination persisted are complex; some have been outlined in previous chapters. Focusing here on the ‘failure’ of reform and improvement campaigns in particular, it is clear that those campaigns began from the perspective that ‘burakumin’ were backward or deficient in specific ways. Reform and improvement were posited as means for them to catch up and

become the same as other ‘ordinary Japanese’. Those campaigns were assimilatory moves through which people of a marginalized social group strove to improve their collective position by modifying certain attributes that others ascribed to them.\(^{157}\)

This reflected the fact that critics explained the plight of ‘new commoners’ and ‘buraku’ residents in terms of stigmatised group characteristics such as speaking non-standard Japanese, lack of hygiene, immorality, ignorance, and so on, which were open to change. The processes by which their defects were identified, and by which they were identified as targets of treatment and correction, entailed the positing of another group of ‘ordinary Japanese’ who implicitly spoke the standard language and were hygienic, moral and educated. Positioned within such a framework, ‘buraku’ residents unsurprisingly set about re-making themselves into members of this latter group.\(^{158}\)

The problem was that this strategy was only partially effective. On the one hand, reform did improve people’s living conditions somewhat. Thrift and industry raised economic living standards, concrete measures such as constructing public baths and following hygiene regulations made communities healthier, and strict internal codes of behaviour and mutual surveillance made communities more orderly.

On the other hand, reform was generally ineffectual as an anti-discriminatory strategy. As Sakai Naoki has proposed, marginalized people tend to seek to assimilate into the mainstream and become one with the mass of good


\(^{158}\)See Tomiyama Ichirō 富山一郎, Kindai Nihon to ‘Okinawajin’ 『近代日本と「沖縄人」』(東京: 日本評論社, 1990), note 19, pp. 31-32.
subjects. But these good subjects are not primarily determined by the possession of certain attributes. By the same token, nor are ‘others’ primarily distinguishable by the peculiarities attributed to them.\textsuperscript{159} This is to say, explanations of discrimination are \textit{post-hoc} legitimations; the authoritative disqualifying criteria cited in them are less reflections of people’s actual circumstances than they are expressions of prevailing social values. Furthermore, the determination of good subjects as ‘good’ depends on the very existence of marginalized and stigmatised others. Attempts to become the ‘same’ are as a rule condemned to failure, with assimilatory attempts more often than not leading to ‘a community of assimilants’, rather than a group of unremarkable fellow nationals.\textsuperscript{160}

Lifestyle reform programs were more significant from another perspective. Those campaigns fostered in their participants the confidence that comparisons with respectable mainstream Japanese people would not find them lacking.\textsuperscript{161} That conviction of similarity founded assertions of entitlement. ‘\textit{Buraku}’ leaders declared that the state had a duty to look after its subjects (citizens) by providing all with certain minimum material living conditions.\textsuperscript{162}

For example, Matsui Shōgorō, Okamoto Wataru and other ‘\textit{buraku}’ activists

\textsuperscript{159} Sakai Naoki 酒井直樹, ‘Nashonarit no to bo(koku)go no seiji’ 「ナショナリティと母(国)語の政治」, in Iyotani Toshio \textit{et al.} (eds.) 伊予谷登志男ほか編, \textit{Nashonarit no datsukōchiku} 『ナショナリティーの脱構築』 (東京: 新曜社, 1996), pp. 40-42.


demanded government money and concrete action to resolve especially the ‘buraku’ problem’s material expressions. Drawing on the rhetoric of the Meiji state in a petition presented to the forty-first parliament, they pronounced that it was the government’s duty ‘to realize the imperial will’ (seishi 聖旨), and act to bring about ‘equality’ (shimin byōdō 四民平等) and ‘universal brotherhood’ (isshi dōjin 一視同仁). 163

Reform, which was problematic in that it involved tacit acknowledgement of the validity of practices of inclusion and exclusion based on the attainment of certain standards and norms, was a process wherein those on the social margins acquired the conviction that they had valid nationalist claims upon the Japanese state. Their claims were recognized by the state, in the form of budgetary allocations and reform programs. And in turn, those official responses would have the effect of strengthening the ‘national’ attachment of ‘buraku’ residents.

163 Matsui Shōgorō et al. 松井庄五郎ほか著，‘Buraku kaizen ni kansuru seigan’「部落改良に関する請願」，1919, reproduced in Okamoto, Tokushu buraku no kaihō, pp. 14-17.
Chapter eight

In conclusion

At the risk of repeating myself and re-stating the obvious, I wish to recap some of the main themes of the preceding chapters in an attempt to draw them together. This thesis opens with an account of how certain custom- and law-based practices involving the ostracism and denigration of ‘former outcasts’ and ‘new commoners’ were re-formulated and ‘maintained’ in the changing social situation of Meiji-period Japan. It continues with an examination of a few individual and local tactics of betterment, and ends with a look at the rise of more durable strategies and organizations of social change. As a result, it may invite interpretation as a narrative of progress, supporting a conception of the modern ‘buraku’ problem as a phenomenon with medieval origins and an Edo-
period florescence that was destined to decline after the Meiji revolution in response to the coming of ‘modernity’.¹

That optimistic view is not without its attractions. But the progression I wished to focus on concerned the establishment of a modern Japanese state and the coming-into-being of a Japanese national community through the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As one means of analysing these developments, I chose to engage in a consideration of the modern ‘buraku’ problem, which unfolded subsequent to the abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups in 1871, and concurrently with the processes of nationalization.

The Meiji government’s introduction of legal equality was one of a range of measures that had the combined effect of giving rise to a Japanese nation-state. In particular, equality before the law, together with the abolition of the ‘outcast’ status groups, allowed for the problematization of some customary practices, such as those involving the exclusion from social and economic relations of ‘former outcasts’ and ‘new commoners’. Those practices could henceforth be characterized as ‘discriminatory’, and denounced as illegitimate.

However, those ‘discriminatory’ practices were conducted by a majority of the population against a small minority; people also examined and explained them in ways that tended to conclude that they were not entirely unjustified. As seen through chapters two and three, for example, elite discourse of the mid-to-late-Meiji period suggested that it was quite acceptable to denigrate and exclude ‘new commoners’, who not only were genetically and morally defective, but also

¹ The view that ‘progress’ would inevitably do away with issues involving ‘discrimination’ was, of course, popular among twentieth-century social scientists of all persuasions. Fukuoka Yasunori 福岡安則, ‘Sabetsu kenkyū no genjō to kadai’ ‘差別研究の現状と課題’, in Inoue Shun et al. (eds.) 井上俊ほか編, Iwanami kōza gendai shakaitō, vol. 15, Sabetsu to kyōsei no shakaigaku 『岩波講座現代社会学 第 15 巻 差別と共生の社会学』(東京: 岩波書店, 1996), pp. 233-234.
of foreign descent. Represented to be less worthy of moral consideration by virtue of their possession of these attributes, such people were portrayed as virtually the opposite of 'true nationals'.

Although these explanations revealed little about the actual situation of those subjected to discrimination, they proved a useful means of furthering the national unification of the majority of the population. That is, in positing the existence of biological and hereditary reasons for the allegedly characteristic 'new commoner' shortcomings, such explanations presented social and economic marginalisation as a natural and unchanging phenomenon. Further, the purveyors of such discourses stressed the social division between 'new commoners' and others, and passed over those that split the unspecified others who constituted a numerical majority of the population. In so doing, they advanced the notion that the 'unstigmatised' population was joined by factors including the common stock and shared cultural and moral standards that constituted the barrier separating them from 'new commoners' (among others). This notion encouraged the self-perception of those within that numerical majority as a united group. In other words, the discourse explaining the rift between 'new commoners' and the rest of the population with reference to the deficiencies and negative attributes of the former helped impart a sense of unity to the latter.²

Clearly, the exclusion of 'new commoners', in discourse as in reality, was never absolute or universal. In certain contexts, the negative attributes ascribed to them slipped into insignificance. Notably, as considered at the end of chapter two, national crises such as those posed by war with foreign powers in the late-Meiji period saw the significance of the 'problems' posed by 'new commoners'

² As Wallerstein says, the integration or unifying of a majority population is the major function of 'racism'. Immanuel Wallerstein, *After liberalism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), pp. 134-135.
downgraded in the interests of reinforcing domestic harmony and unity, at least in popular literature.

The following chapter about theories that ‘new commoners’ had foreign origins ended with a brief look at the expression of this latter principle on a more practical level. Allegations that the exclusion of ‘new commoners’ resulted from their foreign ancestry had the effect of supporting the notion that Japanese people were of common stock, and therefore enjoyed naturally harmonious relations. But bureaucrats and politicians saw few meaningful policy implications in ideas claiming the permanence of ‘new commoner’ ‘defects’; for them, the principal issue was how best to mobilize such people for productive purposes that would further the national interest.

Such considerations of the national interest, revolving around progress and development, affect lines of social inclusion and exclusion in nation-states. This phenomenon reflects the purpose and conditions of existence of nation-states. The nation is the dominant mode of social ‘organization’ within the states that comprise the individual units of the system characterized by uneven development, unequal economic exchange, and the appropriation of surplus value that is the capitalist world-economy.3 The fact that the nation-state, born in the late-eighteenth century, is today the dominant mode of organizing state populations, results from its great capacity to stimulate and harness the creative and productive energies of people resident within state boundaries. That capacity to mobilize people allows for the nation to be characterized as ‘the principal actor of modernization’.4 As such, and existing in this modern system built around endless capital accumulation, no productive capacity, not even of those

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who are represented as defective and problem-ridden ‘others’, can be dispensed with completely and permanently.⁵

For these reasons, and akin to the manner in which subjects of the Japanese colonial empire were represented as one before the ‘West’, only for a distinction between colonized and colonizer to come to the fore when the interests of the two diverged,⁶ the position of ‘new commoners’ in elite Meiji-period discourse varied in accordance with domestic and international considerations relating to productivity, competitiveness, and national integration. Even as the unity of the ‘majority’ domestic population was assured by the positing of such internal others as ‘new commoners’, problematization of the latter was suspended when the unity of the whole population had to be assured vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

The fourth chapter, which examined appeals for ‘new commoners’ to emigrate, revealed a more practical expression of this principle. Those appeals referred at length to the problems posed in the domestic context by ‘new commoners’. But such emigration was not just to entail the departure of a group whose very presence was represented as a domestic problem. More importantly, officials and intellectuals conceived of ‘new commoner’ participation in colonial and overseas labouring initiatives as a means of better extracting the full productive capacity of that part of the population, which they deemed to be stagnating in the home islands.

⁶ See, for example, Oguma Eiji 小熊英二, ‘Nihonjin' no kyōkai—Okinawa / Ainu / Taiwan / Chōsen shokuminchi shihai kara fukken undō made 『<日本人>の境界—沖繩・アイヌ・台灣・朝鮮殖民地支配から復帰運動まで』 (東京：新曜社, 1998), p. 12.
Although migrants were presumably drawn by the prospect of a better life far more than by a wish to fulfil what was represented to them as their obligation as Japanese subjects to contribute to national development, the idea of migration aroused a degree of popular interest, and a number of people did migrate. Whatever the individual motivations involved, I speculated that migration-related experiences might well have given rise to an increased susceptibility to the kinds of appeals to patriotism that were visible in attempts to encourage emigration.

To examine more closely the emergence of a patriotically-minded population, the fifth chapter turned to the role of military service. Instead of focusing on how people were indoctrinated to believe in emperor-system ideology, I considered people’s engagement in ‘patriotic’ acts from a rather ‘rationalist’ viewpoint, as a tactic of self-improvement in Meiji Japan. People heeded state exhortations for loyal and dedicated service because they saw the honour and renown that was represented to be associated with national service as being of potential use in efforts to improve their own lives. The Meiji government’s ability to arouse and direct popular energies for state purposes largely depended, in other words, on having the populace see the prescribed actions to be in its own interests. That such a situation had arisen was manifest on the occasions of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, for instance.

However, it quickly became clear in the years following the Russo-Japanese war that the union of people and state was only provisional, with popular unrest greeting the unrealised promises of better times and national glory to follow wartime sacrifices and hardships. The government response to this critical conjuncture was the Local Improvement Campaign, which was not only
aimed at reinvigorating the economy, but also at renewing the population’s patriotic sentiments.

Elite attempts to influence and change popular lifestyles had become a constant part of life during the Meiji years. Targeting everything from clothing, housing, speech, morals and hygiene to aesthetics, officials and intellectuals saw the improvement of the everyday practices of the masses as an important means of improving Japan’s ability to compete on the world stage. Popular acceptance of stipulated reforms was promoted by their depiction as ways that were fundamental to the realization of popular aspirations. Reform programs relied as much on popular initiatives and voluntary adoption of the norms and practices that elites desired to propagate, as they did on the coercive power of legislation and official directives. That was the contention of the sixth chapter on reform in an urban context, which looked at how one ‘buraku’ district’s leaders set about transforming their hometown into a model area, based on standards wrought by figures in and aligned with the Meiji government, and with the aim of improving their own lives.

To look in more depth at practices of self-improvement, the final chapter took up a range of local as well as government-run reform and improvement activities. From the perspective of those who imagined that their participation would enable them to lead a life free from discrimination, those programs probably had only limited success. But regardless of whether reform and improvement programs were failures in terms of alleviating or eliminating prejudices, they were instrumental in producing a more unified voice calling for state measures and policy responses to treat the ‘buraku problem’, whose essence
campaigners characterized as being the issue that a part of the nation was unjustly deprived of the ability to enjoy its full range of rights.

The early-twentieth-century demands by ‘buraku’ activists for adequate government recognition of their situation can be positioned alongside the popular unrest that followed the Russo-Japanese war and the rise of labour and other popular movements for welfare and suffrage from the Meiji into the Taisho period. Together, they not only had the effect of forcing the state to implement the Local Improvement Campaign, but also of forcing the Japanese state to adopt an ever-expanding range of social policies. These developments signalled the establishment of a bond between state and populace (nation) founded on the indefinite continuation of ‘progress’ and ‘development’. Such a situation persists today, of course, and its unsustainability is increasingly manifest.

Before ending, it is perhaps appropriate to make a few remarks about the manner in which I undertook this project. I chose to examine certain phenomena from the perspective of their relation to processes of nationalization. In particular, I focused on a variety of instances where it was possible to argue that a desire for a better life saw people choose to attach their fates to that of the

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7 Demands for political and economic action were most comprehensively met with government action during the post-war period, as the material benefits of rapid economic development were to some degree passed on through the populace. That process lies behind the currently emerging consensus that the material deprivation of ‘buraku’ communities is well on the way to being resolved. Work on the actuality of the ‘buraku’ problem suggests that discrimination of this particular form is waning, although sporadic incidents still pose a problem. Formerly, a ‘buraku’ identity was imposed through social discrimination, and was also fostered from ‘within’, for the purposes of group integration and unity in the battle against discrimination and for appropriate government recognition of the problem and policy measures to resolve it. From the perspective of mobilization for these ends, it appears that the purpose of ‘buraku’ unity is in question. Moriyasu suggests in this context, for example, that ‘the identity of burakumin is facing a crisis’. Moriyasu Toshiji 守安敏司, ‘Hisabetsu to aidentiti ‘被差別とアイデンティティ’, in Asaji Takeshi et al. (eds.) 朝治武ほか編, Datsujōshiki no buraku mondai 『脱常識の部落問題』 (京都：かもがわ出版, 1998), pp. 47-48. For recent discussions about ‘buraku identity’, see also Fujita Keiichi 藤田敬一, “Burakumin to ha nanika 『「部落民」とは何か』 (京都：阿吽社, 1998). For a discussion of other ‘crises’ relating to identity as well as to organizational issues, see, for example, Terazono Atsushi 寺園敦史, Daremo kakanakatta ‘buraku’ 『だれも書かなかった「部落」』 (京都：かもがわ出版, 1997), pp. 96, 111, p. 194, 219-220, etc.
national collectivity. Whether with regard to speculations about possible links between discourses of national health, ‘buraku’ defectivity and people’s marriage practices, or the adoption of patriotic military practice by ‘new commoners’, I attempted to clarify some of the ways in which people’s actions converged with national principles in so far as those principles accorded with their everyday purposes and aims.

Needless to say, I removed those actions, which obviously had significant and vital dimensions that are not reducible to or explicable solely through reference to national principles, from the everyday contexts in which they occurred. Adopting only the part of them that was easily isolatable and usable, which is to say the portable parts of discourse, I placed them into a framework of the processes of nationalization so as to produce a semblance of order and coherence. Speech acts have not necessarily been examined for the significance that they had in the local environments where they took place. This was a factor of my agenda, and also a result of my initial rather profound ignorance of any kind of history, let alone that of a group whose members were subjected to discrimination in Meiji Japan. It is quite likely, therefore, that I have overlooked all the ways in which those same acts furthered ‘ends and references foreign to the system’.  

As a result, it is necessary to note the uncertainty of this account. As Cornelius Castoriadis mentions, it is not hard to find a synergistically linked web of coherent elements, facts, and developments that lead to, for example, capitalism, once one knows the pre-determined outcome.  

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9 See Cornelius Castoriadis, L’institution imaginaire de la société (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 61-62; or Cornelius Castoriadis, World in fragments. Writings on politics, society, psychoanalysis, and
assumption that a Japanese nation-state was conceived and developed in the Meiji period, it was not hard to join together otherwise unrelated events and actions by emplotting them into a historical narrative about the development of that entity. It needs to be remembered that what I selected were those elements that were consonant with that national project, and which took on significance in that light.

The problems of this work no doubt extend far beyond these few points. But at any rate, by its generality, it may provide a few pointers for future work.
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