Crossing Boundaries

Suzuki Bokushi
(1770-1842)
and the Rural Elite
of
Tokugawa Japan

Takeshi Moriyama
M.A. (Literature and Communication) (Murdoch)

This thesis is presented for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2008
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as
its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree
at any tertiary education institution.

________________________________________
Takeshi Moriyama
This thesis centres on a member of the rural elite, Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842) of Echigo, and his social environment in Tokugawa Japan (1603-1868). Through a case study of the interaction between one individual’s life and his social conditions, the thesis participates in the ongoing scholarly reassessment of Tokugawa society, which had an apparently rigid political and social structure, yet many features that suggest a prototype of modernity. Bokushi’s life was multifaceted. He was a village administrator, landlord, pawnbroker, poet, painter, and great communicator, with a nation-wide correspondence network that crossed various social classes. His remote location and humble lifestyle notwithstanding, he was eventually able to publish a book about his region, Japan’s ‘snow country’. This thesis argues that Bokushi’s life epitomises both the potentiality and the restrictions of his historical moment for a well-placed member of the rural elite. An examination of Bokushi’s life and texts certainly challenges residual notions of the rigidity of social boundaries between the urban and the rural, between social statuses, and between cultural and intellectual communities. But Bokushi’s own actions and attitudes also show the force of conservative social values in provincial life. His activities were also still restrained by the external environment in terms of geographical remoteness, infrastructural limitation, political restrictions, cultural norms and the exigencies of human relationships. Bokushi’s life shows that in his day, Tokugawa social frameworks were being shaken and reshaped by people’s new attempts to cross conventional boundaries, within, however, a range of freedom that had both external and internal limits.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements  i
Conventions  iii
Abbreviations  vi
Tables, Figures and Maps  vii

Introduction  1

Chapter 1  Beyond the Locality: Bokushi’s Life in a Rural Post-Town  56
  Bokushi’s Home Region  57
  The Rural Town of Shiozawa  73
  Bokushi’s Access to Information  83
  Bokushi’s Travels  95

Chapter 2  The Farmer-Merchant: Bokushi’s Rural Business  115
  The Rural Economy in Uonuma  117
  Bokushi as Landlord  130
  Bokushi as Rural Pawnbroker  143
  Bokushi’s Business Values: the Merchant Code  155

Chapter 3  The Household and Individual Lives: Bokushi’s Family Documents  169
  Formal Discourse and Private Voices in Bokushi’s Family History  171
  Marriage and the ‘Household’  182
  Domestic Disputes  201
Chapter 4  Cultured Provincials:  
Bokushi in the Diffusion of the Arts  

220  
Bokushi’s Education  
Bokushi and His Local Intellectual Environment  
Meetings with Visiting Artists and Writers  
Books in the Provinces  
Haikai Poetry in the Uonuma Region  
Bokushi’s Haikai Contests  

Chapter 5  Correspondence and the Cultural Elite:  
Bokushi’s Communication Network  

273  
Bokushi’s Communication Network  
Methods and Context of Bokushi’s Network-Building  
Bokushi’s Use of the Mail System  
Letter-Writing Habits – Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan  
Contents of Letters – Bokushi and His Correspondents  

Chapter 6  Publishing Hokuetsu Seppu:  
Bokushi and His Urban Collaborators  

331  
The Development of Bokushi’s Literary Interest in His Region  
The Provincial Literati and Print Culture  
Bokushi’s Negotiations with Urban Authors  
Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan  
Bokushi, the Edo Publishing World, and Hokuetsu Seppu  

Conclusion  

393  
Appendix  Rice Prices in Shiozawa, 1787-1853  
Bibliography
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Associate Professor Sandra Wilson. Without her apt guidance, patient assistance and warm encouragement throughout my lengthy candidature, this thesis would never have been completed. It was also she who brought me in to the community of historians of Japan in Australian universities and their fellow scholars abroad, conversations with whom helped me a great deal in shaping the various ideas that the thesis contains.

In terms of developing a methodology of how to work on a topic about early modern Japan, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Professors Anne Walthall and David L. Howell. I have been inspired by them and learnt much from my meetings with them, as well as from their books and articles. A recent discussion with Professor Morgan Pitelka was also very beneficial. At a number of Japanese studies conferences and history workshops in Australia, many historians of premodern and modern Japan also gave me useful advice and information. I particularly wish to express my thanks to Professor Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Dr Matthew Stavros, Dr Olivier Ansart, Dr Timothy Amos and Professor Daniel Botsman.

During my fieldwork in Japan in 2000 I was fortunate to receive kind assistance from many scholars, particularly from Professors Aoki Michio and Takeuchi Makoto, Dr Matsunaga Yasuo, Takahashi Minoru, Inoue Keiryū and Isobe Sadaji. My grateful thanks also go to the Suzuki Bokushi Museum, Shiozawa Education Council, the Imanari family of
Muikamachi, Tōkamachi City Museum, Niigata Prefectural Library in Niigata Prefecture, and Hosei University Library in Tokyo.

At Murdoch University, many people have supported my research, both professionally and personally. I especially thank Professors James Warren and David Hill, Radha Krishnan, James Boyd and Naoko Homma. Professor Orie Muta, now in Japan, helped me develop academic interest in Suzuki Bokushi after I had finished my MA thesis under her supervision. I am also thankful to the School of Social Sciences and Humanities for financial support for my fieldwork and conference travel.

Friends and families in Perth, Tokyo and Niigata have continued to support and encourage me. Special thanks are due to Dr Michael Seats, Chikako Murata, Kazuo and Mariko Yamaguchi, Masatoshi and Shinko Moriyama. Most deeply, of course, I am indebted to my own family, Reiko, Marika and Mika, for their continuous cheering me on: ‘Ganbare oōsan!’.

The illustration on the cover page of this thesis is taken from Suzuki Bokushi with Kyōzanjin Momoki (annotated by Okada Takematsu), Hokuetsu seppu (Iwanami shoten, 1978), p. 229. The original was drawn by Suzuki Bokushi, the subject of this thesis. The person on the right is probably Bokushi himself, and on the left is one of his relatives. They are sitting in the drawing room of a rural elite family, looking at a fossil.
CONVENTIONS

This thesis uses the following conventions that have been widely adopted in recent studies of Japanese history in the English language.

Names

Japanese names are given according to Japanese custom, with surname first, except in the case of authors writing in English who choose to reverse the order.

In the case of literary figures, their pseudonyms are generally used once the full name with surname has been given. For example, Suzuki Bokushi is subsequently referred to as Bokushi, his pseudonym, although his surname is Suzuki and his actual given name is Gisōji. I have normally ignored alternative given names, such as those used in childhood and the official name of the household head.

Merchants are sometimes referred to by their tradename. For example, the Ōtsuka family was known in the community as the Takada-ya, its tradename, and so the head of the family is also referred to as Takada-ya.

Dates

Dates are given in numerals in order of: year in the Western calendar/ Japanese month/Japanese date. For example, the 30th day of the 12th month in the 12th year of the Kansei era in the Japanese calendar is given as 1800/12/30. According to convention, I disregard the fact that the last part of the year in the Tokugawa-period calendar actually fell in the early part of the following year in the Gregorian calendar, as a date in the Tokugawa-period calendar was normally twenty to forty days behind the corresponding one in the Gregorian calendar.

The Tokugawa-period calendar had intercalary months (urū zuki) such as urū ni gatsu (intercalary month after the 2nd month), in order to adjust the difference between the lunar calendar and the solar position. The example above would be given as ‘urū 2’ in this thesis.
Where appropriate, dates in the Gregorian calendar are given in addition to Japanese dates. I used the calendar conversion tool at http://maechan.net/kanreki for this purpose.

**Ages**

People’s ages are given in the Japanese traditional age-count system (kazoe doshi), following all the sources used in this thesis. According to this custom, people were considered to be aged one until the end of the year in which they were born, aged two in the second calendar year, and so forth, regardless of their own actual birthdays.

**Currency**

Prices and costs are normally given as they appear in the sources. Where appropriate, however, I convert the sum into an equivalent value of gold currency in ryō. The units of currency in the Tokugawa period were as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kin (gold):} & \quad 1 \text{ ryō} = 4 \text{ bu} = 16 \text{ shu} \\
\text{gin (silver):} & \quad 1 \text{ kan} (= 3.75 kg) = 1,000 \text{ monme} (=10,000 \text{ bu}) \\
\text{zeni:} & \quad 1 \text{ kan} (= 100 \text{ hiki}) = 1,000 \text{ mon}
\end{align*}
\]

Exchange rates among gold, silver and zeni fluctuated from time to time, and to some extent from place to place. I adopt the rate that is the closest possible in time and place. Generally speaking, around the period 1800-1830, one ryō in gold was worth sixty monme in silver, or about 6,000 mon in zeni.

**Koku for rice and landholding**

Koku was a unit of volume, measuring approximately 180 litres, and most significantly was used to measure rice production and trade as well as land value and tax. Under the Tokugawa regime, landholdings were measured in koku as well as area (one tan = 990 square metres) by recording the officially assessed productivity of the rice crop (koku-daka) of each piece of land, even vegetable fields and residential blocks. In this thesis, while one koku of rice means 180 litres of rice grain (which weighs approximately 150
kilograms) unless noted otherwise, one koku of land means a piece of land with an official productivity equivalent to one koku of rice grain annually. As explained in the thesis, there was, however, a considerable gap between officially assessed productivity and actual productivity in rice (jisshū) in the region with which this thesis is concerned, as in other places.

**Macrons**

Macrons are used to indicate long vowels in Japanese such as in ‘Honshū’ and ‘Santō Kyōzan’. However, I follow a widely accepted custom in historical studies of Japan in the English language in not giving macrons in the following words: ‘Tokyo’, ‘Kyoto’, ‘Osaka’, ‘shogun’, ‘daimyo’ and ‘Shinto’. When these words appear in titles and publishers of Japanese publications, however, I do include macrons.

**Place of publication**

All Japanese-language sources are published in Tokyo unless otherwise stated.
ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes.


SBZ2  *Suzuki Bokushi zenshū*, vol. 2 (*gekan shiryōhen*) (details as above).


# TABLES, FIGURES AND MAPS

## Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1.</td>
<td>Texts collected in <em>Suzuki Bokushi zenshū</em>, two volumes</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.</td>
<td>Changes in rulers of Uonuma County (1363-1827) as recorded by Bokushi</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.</td>
<td>Bokushi’s travels beyond Uonuma County</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.</td>
<td>Average costs and profit of <em>chijimi</em> production for weavers in Shiozawa in 1857</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.</td>
<td>Shiozawa district’s trade with other provinces in 1832</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.</td>
<td>Basic demographic data for Shiozawa district (1755)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.</td>
<td>Land acquisition and other changes in the property of the Suzuki family, 1761-1839</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.</td>
<td>Hypothetical calculation of Bokushi’s profit from his 80 koku of paddies, using a 1792 document produced for a lawsuit in Uonuma region</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.</td>
<td>Bokushi’s marriages</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.</td>
<td>Literary and artistic figures who visited the Suzuki family or their relatives/friends</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.</td>
<td>Bokushi’s haikai contest in 1800</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.</td>
<td>Geographical location of the poets whose verses were published in <em>Jippyō hokkushū</em> (1802)</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.</td>
<td>Number of poets in each province whose haikai cards were collected by Bokushi by ca 1832</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.</td>
<td>Bokushi’s contact with famous literati</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.</td>
<td>Correspondence between Bokushi (Shiozawa) and Bakin (Edo), 1818-34</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.</td>
<td>Correspondence between Bokushi (Shiozawa) and Kyōzan (Edo), 1829-34</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.</td>
<td>Number of letters exchanged between Bokushi and Bakin</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.</td>
<td>Bokushi’s negotiations with urban authors over the publication of ‘snow tales’</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.</td>
<td>Urban writers’ plans to publish with Bokushi</td>
<td>p. 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.</td>
<td>The Development of the Kyōzan-Bokushi project to produce <em>Hokuetsu seppu</em></td>
<td>p. 378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figures**

| 1.1. | Illustration of ‘post-station’ (*eki*) in *Hokuetsu seppu* | p. 81 |
| 1.2. | Illustration of ‘town ward’ (*shi chū*) in *Hokuetsu seppu* | p. 81 |
| 1.3. | Illustration of a peasant house in *Hokuetsu seppu* | p. 82 |
| 1.4. | ‘Akiyama kikō’ – Bokushi’s 1829 manuscript | p. 111 |
| 4.1. | An illustration in *Kokkei tabigarasu*, 1820 | p. 239 |
| 4.2. | A Suzuki household document containing a catalogue number entered by Bokushi | p. 245 |
| 4.3. | A *haigaku* in Uonuma | p. 252 |
| 5.1. | Bokushi’s collection of artwork by others | p. 276 |
| 5.2. | Letters from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi | p. 277 |
| 5.3. | Bokushi’s record of the producers of his art collection, with marks identifying type of contact | p. 279 |
| 5.4. | Geographical spread of Bokushi’s correspondents (provinces of residence) | p. 282 |
| 5.5. | Number of letters in Bokushi’s letter-collection and their provinces or cities of origin, ca 1802 | p. 283 |
| 5.6. | Artistic collaborations between Bokushi’s pictures (*ga*) and famous writers’ poems (*san*) | p. 292 |
| 5.7. | *Ukiyo-e* portraits of Ichikawa Danjūrō VII (by Utagawa Kunisada) and Hanaōgi of the Ōgi-ya (by Katsukawa Shunchō) | p. 296 |
| 5.8. | Bokushi’s ‘*surimono*’ (one-page personal print) | p. 319 |
| 6.1. | *Hokuetsu seppu* | p. 334 |
| 6.2. | Landscape pictures by Koizumi Kimei and Bokushi | p. 338 |
| 6.3. | ‘Bull-fighting in Echigo’ | p. 345 |
6.4. ‘Shapes of Snowflakes’: an illustration in *Hokuetsu seppu* p. 377

6.5. Inside cover pages of the first print of Part I of *Hokuetsu seppu* in 1837 and of Part II in 1842 p. 385

6.6. Bokushi’s note on his copy of *Hokuetsu seppu* p. 388

**Maps**

0.1. Provinces (*kuni*) and locations in Tokugawa Japan (1603-1868) p. x

0.2. Echigo Province in the Tokugawa period p. xi

1.1. The rural post-town of Shiozawa p. 79
Map 0.1: Provinces (kuni) and locations in Tokugawa Japan (1603-1868)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aki</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higo</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kii</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shima</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitachi</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōzuke</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimōsa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaji</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizen</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikawa</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimotsuke</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awa (安房)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizen</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikawa</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimotsuke</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaji</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoki</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimasaka</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinano</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyūga</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mino</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suō</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitchū</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iga</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musashi</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suruga</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bizen</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iki*</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutsu</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajima</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungo</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaba</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagato</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanba</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzen</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ise</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noto</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tango</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikugo</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwami</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oki</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tosa</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikuzen</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iyo</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōmi</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tōtōmi</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izu</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōsumi</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsushima*</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echigo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izumi</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owari</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakasa</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echizen</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izumo</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sado</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamashiro</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etchū</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaga</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagami</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamato</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezo-chi*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanuki</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harima</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawachi</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satsuma</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hida</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazusa</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settsu</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These areas were officially not 'provinces' (kuni).
Map 0.2: Echigo Province in the Tokugawa period
INTRODUCTION

This thesis centres on the life of a Japanese provincial figure, Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842), and his social environment in the late Tokugawa period (1603-1868). In the fields of Japanese history and literature, Bokushi has attracted attention from various angles. Among literary scholars, he is best known as the author of Hokuetsu seppu (lit. North-Etsu snow album; an English translation is entitled Snow Country Tales). This publication is an ethnographic account of Echigo Province (present-day Niigata Prefecture), and more specifically, of Bokushi’s home region, Uonuma, focussing on the region’s distinctive features as ‘snow country’. In historical discussions, Bokushi figures as a representative of the gōnō, the stratum of wealthy farmers or rural entrepreneurs who formed an elite class in provincial communities, enjoying the fruits of the economic transformation of the countryside. Bokushi’s detailed family documents, which include autobiographical essays and household chronicles, have


2 Among many editions of Hokuetsu seppu, this thesis mainly uses Suzuki Bokushi with Kyōzanjin Momoki (annotated by Okada Takematsu), Hokuetsu seppu (Iwanami shoten, 1978; first edition 1936) (hereafter HS-Iwanami); and Suzuki Bokushi (trans. Jeffrey Hunter with Rose Lesser; intro. Anne Walthall), Snow Country Tales: Life in the Other Japan (New York: Weatherhill, 1986) (hereafter SCT), as the former is the most widely available edition in Japanese, and the latter is the only available work of translation into English. Other editions will be introduced later.
provided significant materials for study of the gōnō ideology and lifestyle.³ Analysis of literary texts he produced other than Hokuetsu seppu, as well as the records of Bokushi’s cultural activities, which included composition of haikai (the predecessor of haiku) and letter-writing, have also proved fruitful for historical discussions on the intellectual capacity of the rural elite.⁴ Moreover, the collection of letters that Bokushi received from Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848) and Santō Kyōzan (1770-1858), illustrious authors in the capital city of Edo, has attracted attention from literary historians,⁵ and several biographers of Bokushi in Niigata Prefecture have provided specific information on his life.⁶

While Bokushi’s works have provided valuable material for many studies, however, his life as a whole has not yet been fully examined in the


⁶ Major works by biographers of Bokushi include: Miya Eiji (ed.), Zusetsu Hokuetsu seppu jiten (Kadokawa shoten, 1982); Takahashi Minoru, Hokuetsu seppu no shishō (Niigata: Koshi shobō, 1981); Takahashi Minoru, Suzuki Bokushi: Yukiguni no fūdo to bunka (Niigata: Niigataken kyōikuinkai, 1985); Takahashi Minoru, Zayū no Bokushi (Sanjō, Niigata: Nojima shuppan, 2003); Tamura Ken’ichi, Suzuki Bokushi: Hokuetsu seppu ni shōgai o kaketa hito (Niigata: Niigata nippō jigyōsha, 1985); Yamaoka Kei, Echigo no kuni yuki monogatari: Suzuki Bokushi to Hokuetsu seppu (Kōbunsha, 1996); Isobe Sadaji, Suzuki Bokushi no shōgai (Sanjō, Niigata: Nojima shuppan, 1997).
context of the Tokugawa social environment. In fact, Bokushi’s writings and related material reveal much about the social conditions of late Tokugawa Japan. A close examination of Bokushi’s literary works, letters, household chronicles, autobiographical essays and the material objects he collected provides unique and fascinating insight into how social conditions changed during his time, and how these shifting circumstances affected one person’s life, or, more specifically, that person’s construction of his own life in literary and historical terms. This thesis takes up the task of providing such an analysis.

Scholarly views of Tokugawa Japan were for a long time divided into those which emphasized its feudal political structure and those which found in the period a prototype of modernity. These days, however, historians are increasingly producing a more complicated picture of Tokugawa society, as I will discuss below. This thesis participates in the ongoing reassessment of Tokugawa society, by examining the life of one person from various perspectives rather than analyzing a particular aspect of society or attempting to present a general picture of the age. People’s lives are inevitably influenced by the social conditions that surround them, which both enable and restrict their activities. In that regard, the life of one person reflects important things about his or her society. Here I present a case study of the interaction between an individual and his social conditions, through which I suggest the complexity of people’s lives and of their engagement with, in this case, the society of Tokugawa Japan, as well as providing evidence of the great changes taking place during Bokushi’s time.
In overall terms, I aim to assess how Tokugawa social frameworks operated, and how rigid they were, in the case of one provincial figure, and the extent to which those frameworks influenced that individual’s activities and ideas. By the term ‘social frameworks’ I mean both institutional and notional structures which affected people’s political, economic and cultural activities at the levels of the household, community and society in general. I argue that well-placed people like Bokushi were able to take advantage of the increasing permeability of the boundaries of the relevant social frameworks. I also argue, however, that their capacity to cross conventionally perceived boundaries was in the end limited by their particular historical and personal contexts.

The social frameworks with which I am most concerned are the following: the geographical considerations that affected people’s mobility, communication and economic activities; the difference between towns (machī) and villages (mura) in terms of physical features and functions; cultural divisions between cities and countryside; the differing occupational and social status associated with samurai (shi), farmers (nō), artisans (kō) and merchants (shō); the boundaries between famous experts and amateur practitioners in the fields of the arts, literature and other areas; notions of roles in the family and interactions between household norms and individuals’ desires. The thesis considers the extent to which the conventional social boundaries affected Bokushi’s life, and the ways he negotiated them or remained confined by them.

Bokushi’s experiences and activities demonstrate the increasing permeability of social boundaries in this period, especially for people in
rural areas. This phenomenon was largely the result not of a weakening of political control, but rather of development in the economy, and associated trends in mobility, communication, education and cultural activities. On the other hand, however, people’s extended activities across conventional boundaries often contributed to a reconfirmation or even reification of those boundaries. Bokushi, for example, surely became aware of the distinctive features of his own region by learning to compare it with the outside world through education, reading books, meeting with travellers, going on trips and exchanging letters with people in other places. The ultimate result was his presentation of his local region as distinctive: that is, as the ‘snow country’ (yukiguni) in Hokuetsu seppu. Undoubtedly this perspective was reinforced by the urban authors who assisted or tried to assist Bokushi in publishing his book.

I also argue that Bokushi himself was ambivalent about his growing freedom. He seems to have taken full advantage of the social transformation evident in his day; however, we can see in his texts a tension between his enjoyment of the newly available opportunities, particularly in cultural and economic fields, and his caution about breaking social conventions. Such conventions existed in various contexts, ranging from law and order, to general social norms, to the mores of the specific community in which he lived, to his family culture with its strong class consciousness as gōnō, to his own behavioural patterns as influenced by his personality. Because of the conventions associated with these different groupings, as well as temporal factors such as his age and familial circumstances, together with accidental or casual events, Bokushi’s attitudes
and actions in relation to the newly available freedoms were, in the end, not consistent. At different times he reacted in different ways; he was certainly progressive in crucial respects, but he was conservative as well.

The kind of research that underpins this thesis naturally prompts the question of how useful one particular person’s life is in reaching an understanding of the overall state of society in the past. Anne Walthall discusses this problem, stressing the importance of the lives of ordinary individuals in historical studies. The ‘goal’ of biographical studies of ordinary individuals, she maintains, ‘is to integrate [details and lives of those individuals] into the historical narrative’, to ‘encourage readers to recognize the insufficiency of texts that in focusing solely on great figures or large-scale processes tell only part of the story’. Of course, no person perfectly represents his or her society. Strictly speaking, it cannot be taken for granted that any historical study of an individual person’s life can suggest generalizations that apply to other cases. Bearing in mind such limitations of biographical studies, however, the life of Suzuki Bokushi undoubtedly does reflect the society in which he lived. Specifically, Bokushi’s life is significant for the following five reasons.

Firstly, and most importantly for this thesis, Bokushi’s life suggests the liveliness and dynamism of Tokugawa-period society, because his activities crossed various social boundaries that have been conventionally considered to mark the rigidity of the Tokugawa regime. His actions certainly did not always correspond with what might be expected from his

---

formal socio-political status as *hyakushō* (farmer or villager).\(^8\) Moreover, he lived in a rural area that was snow-bound for part of the year, yet he was not isolated from urban culture. He had a wide range of correspondents, from illustrious urban writers to local people, from samurai to priests. He owned large paddy fields, but is better described as a merchant than a farmer, in terms of his consciousness and day-to-day activities. In several fields, Bokushi was active at a meeting-point between two categories — farmer and merchant, rural and urban — suggesting a greater degree of flexibility in Tokugawa-period social categories than has previously been acknowledged.

Secondly, Bokushi’s writings provide ample evidence that the lives of the rural elite were multifaceted in terms of their areas of interest and involvement. The span of his activities reflects the range of opportunities that the rural community offered people like him by this time, and the variety of interests that Bokushi was able to develop in the environment he inhabited. He was active in many fields, including business, the arts, education and politics, as well as family and personal matters. A range of terms can be used to describe Bokushi: he was a pawnshop-owner, moneylender, landlord, poet, writer, painter, collector of letters and artistic work, practitioner of Confucianism, village administrator, head of

\(^8\) The meaning of ‘*hyakushō*’ status has not been settled among historians. Taken from the Chinese classics, the word originally meant ‘commoners in various occupations’. Then it came to mean ordinary villagers, after samurai had established their separate status, and people in towns had come to be called ‘*chōnin*’ (townsmen). See, for example, Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon shakai saikō: kaimin to rettō bunka* (Shōgakkan, 1994), pp. 11-42; Asao Naohiro, ‘Kinsei no mibun to sono hen’yō’, and Yokota Fuyuhiko, ‘Kinseiteki mibunseido no seiritsu’, both in Asao Naohiro (ed.), *Mibun to kakushiki*, vol. 7 of *Nihon no kinsei* (Chūō kōronsha, 1992), pp. 7-40, 41-78 respectively.
household, father, and husband. Such a variety of attributes and roles would not be surprising in modern lives, and is certainly imaginable for premodern people as well. However, the relative scarcity of historical sources about premodern people contributes to a common perception that people’s lives were simple in the past. Bokushi is one historical figure whose writings lead us to reconsider the apparent simplicity of premodern lives.

Thirdly, to a large extent, Bokushi embodies the social transformation of the rural community in the late Tokugawa period. It is now well established that Tokugawa Japan was not a stagnant feudal society but one that experienced considerable changes and development in economy, culture and even political structure. Numerous studies reveal the changes that took place at various stages in the Tokugawa period, whether in villagers’ everyday lives or in the national economy. As was the case with many other members of the gōnō class, Bokushi witnessed and took advantage of such social changes as the spread of the money economy into rural areas, the growth in communication and mobility between cities and villages, the diffusion of basic education and the proliferation of hobby circles including haikai societies. Bokushi’s writings testify to the various changes that took place in his community during his lifetime, while his family documents also record the rise and fall of households in the Suzuki clan, together with their ancestors’ perceived achievements or failures in the course of earlier social and economic transformation. In compiling family documents, Bokushi was motivated by a mixture of pride in the

---

9 One of the best essays summarizing the changes in the Japanese social, political and economic environments during the Tokugawa period is Fukaya Katsumi’s ‘Jūhasseiki kōhan no Nihon: yokan sareru kindai’, in Kinsei 4, vol. 14 of Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi (Iwanami shoten, 1995), pp. 3-65.
achievements of himself and his family in a time of change, and apprehension about the uncertain future. Such ambivalence is also evident in the family precepts recorded by many other wealthy merchants and the gōnō. 10

Fourthly, an examination of Bokushi’s social position as a member of the provincial elite — here broadly defined as the combined group of political, intellectual and cultural leaders in the countryside — has special relevance to studies of Tokugawa society in terms of its capacity to represent the generality of people’s experiences without losing the particularity of individual lives. Historical enquiries about the relation between social transformation and people’s lived experiences often face a problem in representing both sides. A focus on changes in society tends to depict people as a mass, class or social group, failing to reconstruct the individuality or entity of any one life. People’s lives are thus fragmented and treated as data to demonstrate social transformation of some kind. On the other hand, concentration on a limited number of distinguished figures in literature, thought, politics or any other area tends to weaken researchers’ analysis of social context. The provincial elite in Tokugawa Japan provides one potential subject for negotiating this dilemma. Members of this elite were ubiquitous, and therefore their individual experiences were more representative of what was happening throughout Japan than were the experiences of ‘monumental’ historical figures. In terms of reconstructing the individuality of persons in the past, moreover, many members of the

provincial elite offer a considerable amount of material to examine. Much has been published in terms of historical studies and local historical records; more is undoubtedly stored in central and local archives; and presumably a large amount is still kept by the descendants of the Tokugawa rural elite. Because of the wealth of comparative material that is available, Bokushi can be readily situated within this large group of people, and need not be treated only as an isolated historical figure.

Lastly, an examination of the particular period of Bokushi’s life and his specific geographical location makes an important contribution to existing understandings of Tokugawa Japan. In both Japanese and English, there are many studies dealing with the so-called *bakumatsu* period (1853-68), or the last years of the Tokugawa regime after the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry of the US Navy. Some of these studies skilfully show how dramatically people’s individual lives and their society changed in the political turmoil of the *bakumatsu* and Meiji Restoration periods.\(^\text{11}\) This thesis, on the other hand, turns the lens to a different era. It presents a case study of one individual’s interaction with his society at a time that was characterized by far less dramatic upheaval than *bakumatsu*, but that nevertheless witnessed great changes of a more peaceful and incremental nature. The period of Bokushi’s life, spanning from 1770 to 1842, is generally acknowledged to be a time of growth in the economy and development in popular culture, though it also included some years of famine. Edo became a great metropolis with over one million residents,

drawing increasingly large areas of hinterland into its economic and cultural activities. Bokushi’s own region was one such rural area, in spite of its distance from Edo and the mountain barriers blocking the way to the metropolis. As we will see, Bokushi’s life was intimately affected by the increasingly complex engagement of centre and periphery in this period, and conversely, a study of his life helps to elucidate the mechanisms of that engagement.

In terms of Bokushi’s own ambivalent response to the social transformations of the late Tokugawa period, I find three realms of his life to be particularly relevant. They are, firstly, his participation in local economic and cultural activities; secondly, the attitudes and actions evident in his own private life; and, thirdly, his engagement with the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu*.

Bokushi lived in Shiozawa, a small rural town (it remained a ‘village’ in terms of official status) in a mountainous area of Echigo Province, a notably snowy part of Japan then and now. Two important factors produced social and economic changes in Shiozawa in the early modern context. One was its function as a post-town (*shuku*) on an Edo-bound highway. The other was its market function in relation to local commerce and industries, particularly the production and sale of the local specialty of crepe cloth made of hemp, which was known as ‘Echigo chijimi’. This local industry played a considerable role in both the economic and the cultural transformation of the region, which in turn boosted the spread of the money economy and enhanced the exchange of commodities, people and information with Edo and other cities, a
development that was also occurring in many other places producing local specialties in the late Tokugawa period.¹²

Bokushi’s location at such a nexus in economic and communication networks as a member of the local elite provided him with good opportunities at the intersection of urban and rural cultures. Thus he was able to travel to large cities and other places, meet with artists and literati, whether professional or amateur, and communicate by letter with a great number of people. His location and status undoubtedly also helped him take advantage of other opportunities: to learn from priests, play an active role in haikai societies, and read books as well as developing a personal library. While enjoying all these opportunities, Bokushi gradually narrowed his cultural and psychological distance from the ‘centre’.

Along with his progressive attitudes and actions, however, Bokushi’s writings also clearly display the conservatism of his lifestyle and his wariness of self-indulgence. In accordance with Confucian teaching, he repeatedly stressed ‘frugality’ and ‘diligence’. ‘Family business first’ was a motto of his. This does not mean that Bokushi was reactionary, but rather indicates that he shared a certain discourse with others who were faced with the dilemma between engaging in economic activities and pursuing cultural enjoyment. Repeated emphasis by Bokushi and others on Confucian-style norms strongly suggests that rural communities were witnessing many troubles and much uncertainty as a result of social and economic

transformation in the late Tokugawa period. On the one hand, Bokushi’s day was, in his words, a ‘glorious era of great peace’ (taihei no goseidai) in which ‘even humble commoners enjoyed prosperity’, but on the other hand it was also a ‘precarious time’ (yudan naranu jisetsu) that saw ‘society changing in various ways’.

Bokushi’s texts also reveal tensions in his private life between the perceived household interest and the desire for individual freedom. His household chronicle, ‘Eisei kirokushū’ (lit. Perpetual record), reflects precisely the effort by wealthy farmers to establish their own household identities and histories. The activities of Bokushi and others indicate that at least some well-to-do farmers were adopting the household-centred norm, or ‘ie’ ideology, which had originally been developed by the aristocratic and samurai classes. The adoption of ‘ie’ ideology by members of the gōnō class was often related to their proud family origins in samurai or ancient aristocratic lineages, as Bokushi’s case attests.

While incorporating such normative ‘ie’ ideology, however, Bokushi’s writings also expose the existence of tensions and conflict among family members, and reveal that some people even fled the household. Bokushi’s marriages and divorces are one area in which such tension is clearly evident. The departures of Bokushi’s wives — five women before

---

15 See Walthall, ‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth Century Japan’.
16 For the historical development of ‘ie’ ideology and its spread from the upper class to the lower, see, for example, Yamamoto Shinkō, ‘Kaisetsu’, in Yamamoto Shinkō (comp.), Kakunshū (Heibonsha, 2001), pp. 383-410.
the last wife — encompass many kinds of problems, including parents’
dissatisfaction, discord between husband and wife, and even a wife’s
elopement with someone else. Moreover, intense discord between Bokushi
and his son-in-law in many domestic matters is revealed in his last piece of
writing, ‘Isho’ (Final testament).

Bokushi’s efforts to publish *Hokuetsu seppu* also demonstrate the
ambiguity of his situation. On the one hand, his attempts to publish a book
at all clearly show that his experiences transcended the normal limits of
rural people’s activities in the Tokugawa period. On the other hand, the
long and complicated path to publication exposes the many kinds of
difficulties faced by the provincial amateur writer who wanted to realize his
work in print.

*Hokuetsu seppu* was originally published in Edo by a popular
publishing house. Part I (*sho-hen*), consisting of three volumes, appeared in
1837. Its success led to publication of Part II (*ni-hen*), consisting of another
four volumes, in 1842. The book as a whole represents a very significant
example of a provincial amateur’s achievement in publishing for a national
audience at this time. It also provides strong evidence of the cultural
development of provincial intellectuals. Not only were they active and
longstanding readers; at least a few of them, evidently, were able to play a
productive role in the actual publication of books as well.

---

17 As was typical in block-printed books in the Tokugawa period, each
instalment consisted of a few separately-bound books, each of which
contained around forty to sixty pages. In this thesis, however, I treat all
these books, seven volumes altogether, as a single piece of work unless
otherwise specified.
Yet, a publication like *Hokuetsu seppu* would have been impossible without the active interest of urban professional writers and publishers who were familiar with the demands of and trends in the publication market. In fact, Bokushi’s idea to write a book about life and nature in his snowy region attracted, in turn, four urban authors, Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), Okada Gyokuzan (1733?-1808?), Suzuki Fuyō (1749-1816) and Takizawa Bakin, before a fifth, Santō Kyōzan, eventually worked with Bokushi to publish *Hokuetsu seppu*. It would hardly have been possible for Bokushi alone to negotiate with publishers and work with illustrators and other people in the urban print industry. Once again, therefore, the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* points to the increasing links between centre and periphery in the late Tokugawa period. More importantly, it reflects the commodification of rural Japan in the context of the rapidly expanding publication market. In order to attract publishers and ultimately urban readers, Bokushi’s region as the subject of the book needed to be discursively crafted as a snow-country periphery in contrast with the centre of the nation. It is likely that Bokushi himself gradually realized how to locate his region within the dominant Edo-centred discourse as he familiarized himself with urban culture more generally. In this regard, *Hokuetsu seppu* can be seen as a paradoxical symbol of the relation between the urban and the rural in the late Tokugawa period, in that it highlights the distinction between urban and rural lives even though the work itself can be considered as a result of the growing links between the two realms.
In historiographical terms, this thesis builds on several broad scholarly trends evident in a wide range of recent works. First and foremost, it participates in historians’ collective endeavour to diversify the general view of Tokugawa Japan. Perspectives on Tokugawa society have shifted from time to time in interesting ways, reflecting the prevailing ideologies of each period as well as Japan’s international status in political and economic terms and its relationship to other countries, particularly in the West.\(^\text{18}\) Previously, a Marxist perspective stressed the apparent backwardness and oppressiveness of the Tokugawa regime. Such a view was followed by sweeping and positive reconsideration of Tokugawa social institutions, which came to be considered important to a modernization process comparable to the Western experience.\(^\text{19}\) The focus then shifted to ‘off-centre’ or ‘neglected’ areas of research such as peasant uprisings.\(^\text{20}\)

---


The most recent scholarship places much emphasis on the complexity of Tokugawa Japan, and many works relate the Tokugawa to the Meiji period. In my view, one common aim evident in a number of important recent studies is to problematize the idea of ‘boundaries’ in Tokugawa Japan. Such ‘boundaries’ include the temporal division between the Tokugawa period and the Meiji period at both institutional and personal levels;\textsuperscript{21} the geographical and political divisions between the central state and the regions, or between ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’;\textsuperscript{22} social boundaries in relation to people’s political status and economic and cultural activities;\textsuperscript{23} and gender boundaries with regard to women’s participation in political and intellectual movements.\textsuperscript{24}

This thesis draws on three important themes presented in recent scholarship concerning ‘boundaries’ in Tokugawa Japan. The first is the


\textsuperscript{22} The connections and disjunctions between the state and a particular region in economic and social development are discussed in, for example, Kären Wigen, \textit{The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750-1920} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); David L. Howell, \textit{Capitalism from Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Kawanishi Hidemichi, Namikawa Kenji and M. William Steele (eds), \textit{Rōkaruhisutori kara gurōbaruhistōri e: tabunka no rekishigaku to chiiti-shi} (Iwata shoin, 2005).

\textsuperscript{23} Significant recent publications that concern Tokugawa social boundaries include those by Japanese historians who formed a study group called Mibun-tekishūen kenkyūkai (research group for the study of ‘periphery’ in social status). See, for example, Yokota Fuyuhiko (ed.), \textit{Chishiki to gakumon o ninau hitobito}, vol. 5 of \textit{Mibun-tekishiūen to kinsei shakai} (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007).

\textsuperscript{24} Important works include Walthall, \textit{The Weak Body of a Useless Woman}; Bettina Gramlich-Oka, \textit{Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825)} (Leiden: Brill, 2006).
importance of both connection and disjunction between two things supposedly divided, as demonstrated by David L. Howell in relation to economic, social and political transformation from the Tokugawa period to Meiji. Howell argues that a variety of modern institutions and concepts, extending to the nation-state of Japan and dominant perceptions of Japanese identity, were historically constructed during the Meiji period in the process of Japan’s intensive engagement with the West; however, the ‘raw materials’ for these projects had been prepared ‘within’ Tokugawa Japan. Bokushi’s texts contain materials suggesting both the connection and the disjunction between the premodern and the modern, and across urban and rural distinctions in economic and cultural activities, and elite/non-elite divisions in various types of social status.

The second theme is the coexistence of tendencies towards convergence and divergence in cultural production, as presented in work by Mary Elizabeth Berry. Analysing Tokugawa-era maps, Berry argues that while a variety of political and cultural systems certainly did differentiate people and regions in Tokugawa society, there were also ‘integrative principles that can connect necessarily different units in society’. I will show that Hokuetsu seppu was one cultural artefact produced at the intersection of the growing contemporary interest in regional diversities on the one hand, and Edo-centred cultural integration across the country on the other. Moreover, I argue that although Bokushi’s personal experiences in

---

Crossing boundaries indicate a dynamic tendency towards social convergence and cultural integration, the limits in his negotiation of social frameworks also point to the power of differentiation among statuses and across both geographical distance and the urban/rural divide.

The third theme is the extent of people’s freedom within the structures that confined Tokugawa society, such as the status system, geopolitical divisions and gender norms. For example, Berry has demonstrated that people had a certain freedom in participating in the public sphere despite the authoritarian political structure of the Tokugawa regime, while Howell has revealed the limited but important economic freedom that existed within the status system.27 Biographical studies by Walthall and Gramlich-Oka also highlight the limits within which female intellectuals operated, and yet the ways in which they crafted their identities beyond supposed gender norms.28 This thesis will further indicate both the constraints and the freedom experienced by Bokushi and others within the established geographic, political and cultural structures of Tokugawa Japan.

Meanwhile, in reconsidering the Tokugawa social order, I make use of the concept, elaborated by a number of historians in different contexts, of a ‘middle’ position between two binary social categories. Studies of European middle classes are one fruitful field in this regard.29 Such works

---

28 Walthall, The Weak Body of a Useless Woman; Gramlich-Oka, Thinking Like a Man.
29 See, for example, Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (eds), The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-
ultimately suggest that past society was likely to have consisted of more strata than is allowed for by simple divisions into what historians have generally called the ‘above’, the ‘middle’ and the ‘below’, and that the borders between such categories were blurrier and more permeable than has conventionally been thought. This view was expressed by Peter Burke in his 1991 review of the development of the so-called ‘new history’. According to Burke, ‘new history’ began with ‘reactions against the study of grand social trends, society without a human face’, and had begun to move towards a ‘synthesis’ of dichotomies such as ‘the high [culture] and the low [culture]’. Historians had become more interested, he said, in the ‘changing relations’ between, or the ‘intersection’ of, such oppositions as the ‘above’ and the ‘below’. A similar perspective can be observed in certain studies by Japanese historians of the Tokugawa social order as well. The socio-cultural schema represented as ‘above’-‘middle’-‘below’ or ‘high’-‘middle’-‘low’ can also be translated into a geo-cultural schema: ‘centre’-‘medium’-‘periphery’. In both schemas, members of the provincial
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

elite like Bokushi seem to have great significance because they are placed at the ‘intersection’ in Burke’s terms. This thesis will argue that Bokushi’s actions throughout his life exemplify the provincial elite’s position in the ‘middle’, and its role as ‘intermediary’ in terms of the exchange of information and culture between the two ends in each schema.

My research also focuses on the complexity of an individual person’s identity in his social context. Here I benefit most from Anne Walthall’s biographical study of Matsuo Taseko (1811-94), who was best known as a politically active female practitioner of kokugaku (national learning or nativism) from bakumatsu to the early Meiji years. While unfolding Taseko’s life history from various angles, Walthall shows that this woman from a gōnō family displayed different identities depending on the context. Thus she can be viewed from the standpoints of literature, politics, domestic life and her own personal life. Gramlich-Oka has successfully employed Walthall’s framework in her study of Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825), another female practitioner of kokugaku, and my thesis, too, is indebted to Walthall’s approach.

The kind of perspective developed by Walthall leads to the question of the extent to which it was possible for an individual actually to have a heterogeneous identity in the context of late Tokugawa or early Meiji society. Some studies suggest a seamless transition on the part of an individual from one kind of activity to another. Brian Platt, for example, states that although elite villagers performed a variety of roles simultaneously, their activities ‘were overlapping and complementary’, and,

---

33 Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman*.
34 Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man*.

21
in essence, were ‘interwoven in an integrated mode of life’. Sugi Hitoshi also emphasizes the inseparability of the provincial elite’s different activities in the economy and culture.

Bokushi’s case, however, is ambiguous in this respect. His multiple roles as an amateur writer, village official, and wealthy farmer-merchant were not always complementary. Most clearly, there was an internal conflict between the need to run his business and his pursuit of cultural achievements like publishing a book. More generally, membership of each category within the rural elite differed, albeit only partially. Not all provincial literati were village officials or wealthy farmer-merchants; some were priests or doctors. There was room for idiosyncrasies: some people were personally more inclined to one area of activity than others. In describing the groups to which he belonged, Bokushi used different terms: ‘shinshōmochi’ (the propertied) for his economic status, ‘fūryū’ (aesthetic) for his cultural identity as an art-lover, and ‘toshiyori’ (elder) for the official political status that he was granted in his fifties on being promoted from ordinary ‘hyakushō’ status. In addition, Bokushi’s brother-in-law used the term ‘chōka hyakushō’ (townsman-farmers) to distinguish himself and other residents of rural towns from farmers in surrounding villages. Thus, multiple layers of social norms appropriate to the different groups co-existed. They were largely overlapping but partially discrete from each other.

36 Sugi Hitoshi, Kinsei no chiiki to zaison-bunka: gijutsu to shōhin to fūga no kōryū (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2001). See, especially, Chapters 2 and 3 for Sugi’s discussion of Bokushi.
other. In the chapters that follow, I explore such complexities in Bokushi’s identity.

Finally, this thesis also takes account of historians’ awareness of the importance of an individual’s personal attributes, and of historical accidents. Thus I highlight these factors when examining Bokushi’s interaction with his social context. Social structure and conditions are crucial dimensions of anyone’s life in any period. However, historians have generally become more careful in linking social conditions with people’s individual actions, because personal attributes and unexpected happenings always play a role.38 Ultimately, people’s experiences are diverse and distinctive, because individuals have different attributes, encounter various events in different ways and at different times, and are affected by social conditions to different degrees. Bokushi’s life was indeed subject to unexpected events. Domestic incidents that affected the course of his life include his marriage breakdowns, the deaths of his heir and his wife of many years, and his confrontation with his son-in-law. His path to the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* consisted of a series of events, many of which were contingent on previous occurrences. Not everything can be explained by external structures and conditions; there was always the possibility that something might not have happened as it did happen.

* * * * * * *

Academic interest in Suzuki Bokushi has grown considerably over the last several decades. According to a survey conducted by Niigata Prefectural Library upon my request of published directories of Japanese historical figures, Bokushi’s name first appeared in the 1906 edition of *Dai-Nippon jinmei jisho* (Biographical dictionary of Great Japan) but the recognition of Bokushi as an important figure in Japanese history was not consistent across major directories published before the 1960s. From 1968 onwards, almost all major directories of this kind, as well as dictionaries of Japanese history — thirteen publications in total in this survey — contain an entry entitled ‘Suzuki Bokushi’. Likewise, his name appears in printed publications and other types of media frequently and widely from the 1970s onwards.\(^{39}\)

Bokushi is now considered by many authors to be an important figure in Tokugawa culture. One listing, by Tokugawa Tsunenari, the current head of the former shogun’s family, seeks to convey the point that a very wide range

---

\(^{39}\) The survey report to me dated 1 May 2008 states that the following directories and dictionaries include an entry entitled ‘Suzuki Bokushi’. This data may assist future study of Bokushi. Keizai zasshisha (ed.), *Dai-Nippon jinmei jisho* (Keizai zasshisha, 6\(^{th}\) edn, 1909); Haga Yaichi (ed.), *Nihon jinmei jiten* (Okura shoten, 1914); Heibonsha (ed.), *Shinsen dai jinmei jiten*, vol. 3 (Heibonsha, 1937); Itō Sei, et al. (eds), *Shinchō Nihon bungaku shō jiten* (Shinchōsha, 1968); Shōgakkan (ed.), *Dai Nihon hyakka jiten*, vol. 10 (Shōgakkan, 1970); Shōgakkan (ed.), *Nihon dai hyakka zensho*, vol. 13 (Shōgakkan, 1987); Isoda Kōichi, et al. (eds), *Shinchō Nihon bungaku jiten* (Shinchōsha, 1988); Shinchōsha jiten henshūbu (ed.), *Shinchō Nihon jinmei jiten* (Shinchōsha, 1991); Sanseidō henshūjo (ed.), *Konsaisu Nihon jinmei jiten* (Sanseidō, revised edn, 1993); Heibonsha (ed.), *Nihon-shi dai jiten*, vol. 4 (Heibonsha, 1993); Asahi shinbunsha (ed.), *Asahi Nihon rekishi jinbutsu jiten* (Asahi shinbunsha, 1994); Ichiko Teiji, et al. (eds), *Kokusho jinmei jiten*, vol. 2 (Iwanami shoten, 1995); Musashi shobō (ed.), *Nihon jinmei jiten* (Musashi shobō, 1996); Kano Masanao, et al. (eds), *Minkangaku jiten jinmei hen* (Sanseidō, 1997); Nihon-shi kō jiten henshū inkai (ed.), *Nihon-shi jinbutsu jiten* (Yamakawa shuppansha, 2000); Shōgakkan (ed.), *Edo-jidai jinmei hikae 1000* (Shōgakkan, 2007). On the other hand, the following directories do not contain an entry entitled ‘Suzuki Bokushi’: Kamiya Toshio, *Saishin Nihon chosakusha jiten* (Daidōkan shoten, 1931); Hioki Shōichi (ed.), *Nihon rekishi jinmei jiten* (Kaizōsha, 1938).
of people in terms of social background contributed to the writing of literature in Edo. In this list Tokugawa includes fourteen writers, from daimyo to bakufu officials, to townsmen, to rural people, including Bokushi.  

The trajectory of studies about Bokushi began with an essay by Ichijima Kenkichi in 1926. Ichijima was the first to reveal the highly complex process that Bokushi’s *Hokuetsu seppu* went through before publication in 1837, highlighting the self-interest of and interpersonal conflicts among the leading literary figures Kyōden, Kyōzan and Bakin, as well as their relationships with Bokushi himself. Ichijima’s essay disclosed many ‘human’ elements such as Bokushi’s growing frustration about the low level of Bakin’s commitment, which provoked their dramatic break-up; and his consequent decision to take up a more enthusiastic offer of help from Kyōzan. Bokushi’s switch from Bakin to Kyōzan of itself has been sufficient to ensure that Bokushi and *Hokuetsu seppu* have aroused considerable interest among literary historians of the late Tokugawa period, as it is evident that the rivalry and antagonism between Bakin and the Santō brothers were well known in the Edo literary world.

The fact that a provincial amateur writer became involved in the world of Edo literature, first recognized by Ichijima, has become a central issue in subsequent studies that refer to Bokushi’s life and literature. However, Ichijima also created controversy about *Hokuetsu seppu*, in

---

relation to the question of who actually wrote the text. Bokushi’s authorship or at least his status as the principal author of *Hokuetsu seppu* is now almost unquestioned, although it is well known that the work came into existence as a result of cooperation between Bokushi and Kyōzan. While many commentaries interpret Kyōzan as an adviser-editor, it is highly noteworthy that Ichijima believed the whole text of *Hokuetsu seppu* had been rewritten by Kyōzan based on a draft by Bokushi.42

As I will show in Chapter Six, the question of authorship of *Hokuetsu seppu* has remained unresolved due to a lack of definitive evidence, such as a draft by Bokushi himself. It can also be said that the issue has become increasingly unwelcome with the growing appreciation of Bokushi’s life and work. I believe, however, that this question is still worth considering, not so much for the sake of revealing the truth, but rather because it will broaden our understanding of commercial publication practice in the late Tokugawa period and of the roles of writers, editors, publishers and illustrators, as well as bookshops and their readers. In modern terms, in my view, Bokushi can fairly be called the ‘co-author’ of *Hokuetsu seppu* in its published form, and the fact of cooperation between him and Edo authors is itself of great significance.

Interestingly, it was not literary historians but meteorologists who followed Ichijima in paying attention to *Hokuetsu seppu*, which they saw as a rare premodern document about snow. In 1936 the first modern typed publication of the text appeared in the popular Iwanami paperback form with a preface and annotation by Okada Takematsu, then the Director of the

---

42 Ibid., pp. 276-77.
The survival of *Hokuetsu seppu* and, consequently, the reputation of its authors, especially Bokushi, owe much to Okada for his initial effort in arranging the Iwanami paperback publication. Since then, this text has maintained considerable popularity among a modern readership. As of May 2005, the Iwanami paperback version of *Hokuetsu seppu* had been reprinted sixty times, making a total of 220,000 copies since its first printing in 1936. Apart from this popular book, *Hokuetsu seppu* has been reproduced in several other versions.

Historians’ interest in Bokushi and *Hokuetsu seppu* can first be detected in Itō Tasaburō’s 1943 essay, ‘Shomin bunka shiron’ (An approach to popular culture). This is a remarkable essay in that it already stresses the significance of the ‘middle’ or intermediary position of the Tokugawa provincial elite, although I cannot confirm that the essay had any immediate effect on academic discourse in the field of Japanese history. Itō criticises the then conventional standpoint of cultural historians of Tokugawa Japan, who tended to look only at urban culture or rural villages. He asserts that it is people in the middle position socially and geo-culturally who ‘contributed


44 Email correspondence from Iwanami shoten, 7 September 2005.

to and benefited from the making of national culture’. 46 He regards Bokushi and Hokuetsu seppu highly, emphasizing the significance of ‘the fact that this text was written by a townsman in a small rural town in the mountains’. 47 Itō failed, however, to take into consideration Kyōzan’s role in the publication of Hokuetsu seppu.

Itō’s interpretation of rural intellectuals as exemplars and agents of mass cultural transformation in the late Tokugawa period was developed by historians much later in the 1960s and 1970s. This interpretive trend was related to the general post-war movement in historical studies towards local studies and ‘people’s histories’, which departed from previously dominant subjects such as high politics and the national economy. 48 In this shift of interest, Bokushi came to be regarded as part of the so-called ‘sōmō no bunka’ or grass-roots culture. For example, in 1961, Kodama Kōta, the then president of the Chihō-shi kenkyū kyōgikai (Association for studies of local history), presented a brief lecture on the 120th anniversary of Bokushi’s death, emphasizing the significance of people like Bokushi ‘as conveyors of culture to the provinces’. Studies of Bokushi’s life, he said, ‘can contribute to an understanding of the pathway of the cultural development of our entire nation’. 49

The lives of provincial intellectuals in Japan in the Tokugawa period are now generally considered to show several things. First, such

---

47 Ibid., p. 27.
intellectuals’ activities indicate that provincial culture by the early nineteenth century had reached the stage of producing its own literary artefacts that in turn contributed to the ‘central’ culture. Second, unlike conventional contributors to the arts such as aristocrats, priests, doctors or city-based artists and writers, rural writers were also substantially committed to their own worldly business in the economy and often in village administration. Such responsibilities are then regarded as an important factor in creating distinctive characteristics in their literature, thus separating their work from earlier and contemporaneous literature produced by high and urban cultures. Moreover, the emergence of these literary figures and their work was itself made possible only by tremendous economic growth, based on regional commercial production of such goods as textiles and dyes, which was interdependent with the development of national distribution systems. And, to conclude, all such flow of commodities, money and information further boosted people’s mobility and social and educational opportunities, thus contributing to the formation of national as well as regional culture in the modern period.50

Bokushi’s life indeed seems to exemplify these trends, as Nishiyama Matsunosuke and Kitajima Masamoto have demonstrated.51 It may be, however, that such observations by cultural historians on the late Tokugawa period have overemphasized the importance of local culture or


oversimplified the lives of members of the provincial elite. For example, Nishiyama, one of the few commentators on Bokushi whose work is available in English translation, claims that Bokushi’s extant texts ‘indicate that at the start of the nineteenth century, culture at Shiozawa was held in high regard by both urban and rural inhabitants of Japan’.\textsuperscript{52} People’s liberty and opportunities in the countryside were doubtless greater than was once believed; however, as far as Shiozawa is concerned, there is no evidence to show that it held a prominent cultural status in comparison with other nearby rural towns. Rather, certain documents indicate that neither Shiozawa nor Bokushi was remarkable even in Echigo Province. According to ‘Echigo no kuni bunjin kagami’ (The ranking of literati in Echigo Province), an amusing imitation of the ranking of sumo-wrestlers that was printed in 1836, just before \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} appeared, Bokushi was ranked among ‘sewanin’ (assistants to the promoter), not as high as ‘ōzeki’ (first-ranking wrestlers) or ‘komusubi’ (second-ranking wrestlers). Including Bokushi, Shiozawa had only two among 182 Echigo literati in this list.\textsuperscript{53} Similarly, Shiozawa does not seem to rank as a highly cultured place in

\textsuperscript{52} Nishiyama Matsunosuke (trans. and ed. Gerald Groemer), \textit{Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 103. This discussion was originally presented in his 1967 essay ‘Edo bunka to chihō bunka’. Nishiyama’s \textit{Edo Culture} contains some inaccurate information about Bokushi’s socialization. For example, it lists nineteen names of famous writers and artists in Edo as Bokushi’s correspondents, and then writes that ‘many of these luminaries had travelled to Echigo and called upon Bokushi in Shiozawa’ (Nishiyama, \textit{Edo Culture}, p. 102). But the visits of only three of them can actually be confirmed.

another ‘Who’s-Who’-like list of literati in Echigo Province, *Echigo jinbutsushi*, published in 1845.\(^{54}\)

At any rate, as scholars have taken more and more interest in provincial culture, the perceived division between the elites and ordinary people or cities and villages in terms of socio-cultural opportunities has become increasingly blurred. Starting from studies such as that by Tsukamoto Manabu in the 1960s, historians have expanded their knowledge of people’s literary activities in rural villages in the premodern period.\(^{55}\) Tsukamoto also succeeded in his 1977 book *Chihō bunjin* (The provincial literati) in establishing the significance of provincial intellectuals, and in broadening the range of people to be called ‘*bunjin*’, a term that had traditionally referred solely to people devoted exclusively to literature.\(^{56}\)

The fruits of fieldwork by a number of historians in many places have changed the map of the location of Tokugawa intellectuals, undermining the dominance of the three metropolises, Edo, Osaka and Kyoto.\(^{57}\)

Even with such an expanded view of *bunjin* as in Tsukamoto’s 1977 book, however, Bokushi was not yet included, since historical research still

---

\(^{54}\) ‘Echigo jinbutsushi’, in Mori Senzō and Nakajima Satohiro (comps), *Kinsei jinmeiroku shūsei*, vol. 2 (Benseisha, 1976), pp. 440-56. There are four people from Shiozawa in this print, including Bokushi’s son, Bokusui (Yahachi). Ibid., p. 450.


Introduction

primarily dealt with people with scholarly knowledge of the Chinese classics, waka-poetry, kokugaku or medicine. Yet, particularly in studies from the 1980s onwards, historians’ perceptions of Tokugawa culture have broadened to include popular forms of poetry such as haikai, kyōka (satirical poems) and senryū (humorous haiku), or people’s hobbies like ikebana (flower arrangement), chanoyu (aesthetics of tea-making), shōgi (a chess-like game) and igo (a checkers-like game), which were all practised by the wider population.58 Morgan Pitelka has shown that even pottery techniques which used to be restricted to a closed hierarchical school of potters in Kyoto came to be published and read by a great many practitioners of tea culture in the cities and provinces from the mid-eighteenth century. Pitelka also demonstrates that the conventional borders between ‘high culture’ and ‘popular culture’, between the cities and the provinces, became increasingly blurred along with the popularization of many cultural activities.59 In that light, the booming haikai practice in provincial areas from the eighteenth century onwards — which had been almost ignored in literary history because of its apparently low artistic value — became a worthy subject to consider, particularly in terms of its social features, such as its complex organizational networks, its multilevel structure from professional gurus to ordinary peasant practitioners, and its indirect effect on literacy in villages.

Bokushi’s activity as a local organizer of haikai circles has become a prime example in discussions of such broader cultural movements in the provinces of Tokugawa Japan. Along with earlier Japanese essays such as those by Nishiyama Matsunosuke and Sugi Hitoshi,60 two recent books in English, by Eiko Ikegami in 2005 and Richard Rubinger in 2007, also treat Bokushi’s haikai network as important evidence of cultural diffusion into provincial areas.61 For both Ikegami and Rubinger, Bokushi’s haikai activities represent the liveliness of provincial people’s cultural lives in the early nineteenth century. The implication is that if such cultural activity can be observed even in ‘the remotest part’ of Japan, the ‘economically backward’ snow country, then it must have been widespread.62 Probably it is right to conclude that what was happening to Bokushi’s region was happening to very many other places, even in remote areas. However, it is also important to note that Bokushi’s region had its own particular geographical, cultural and economic conditions, and that his own personal circumstances also differed from those of others. Ikegami’s discussion in particular omits consideration of a number of crucial factors, as I will point out in Chapter Four.


62 Rubinger, Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan, p. 118; Ikegami, Bonds of Civility, p. 208, respectively.
More significantly for this thesis, there have also been attempts to reconstruct the lives and thought of specific persons who played an important role in both intra- and inter-regional social activities in Tokugawa Japan. Takahashi Satoshi, for example, focused closely on a particular rural elite family in his 1990 attempt to present a comprehensive picture of an early modern village with reference to finance, education, and the demographic structures of both family and village. This work offers much insight into Tokugawa village practice, providing detailed data as well as an integrated view of the village. However, the human qualities of the main figures in the research are not depicted fully enough to permit a clear view of their personalities. In another example, Yaba Katsuyuki’s work on provincial haikai poets reveals the surprising scale of the networks of their letter-communication. Sugi Hitoshi, for his part, introduces distinctive episodes involving several provincial literary figures, including Bokushi. Such studies certainly contribute valuable material on the lives and thought of provincial intellectuals in the early nineteenth century. Yet, any attempt more fully to comprehend the lives of members of the provincial elite will remain frustrated until the multi-layered identities of these people are sufficiently acknowledged and investigated.

One aspect of the lifestyles of members of the provincial elite with which researchers are invariably concerned is the close relation between

---

63 Takahashi, *Kinsei sonraku seikatsubunka-shi josetsu*.
64 See, for example, Yaba Katsuyuki, *Shokan ni yoru kinseikōki haikai no kenkyū* (Seishōdō shoten, 1997).
cultural activities and economic pursuits. Studies of gōnō have produced lively debates in this area.\(^6^6\) The primary issue in these debates is the specific functions of the gōnō class and their significance with regard to the modern transformation of the countryside and the nation. For, as the gōnō class was ubiquitous in agricultural areas in Japan, especially in the nineteenth century, wealthy farmers are presumed to have played an influential role in the metamorphosis of the countryside in a number of respects.

As far as this thesis is concerned, studies relating to the gōnō are significant for the following reasons. Firstly, the gōnō were a leading part of the middle stratum whose actions contributed to the powerful momentum for social reform before the Meiji Restoration and beyond. As Haga Noboru illustrates, the accumulation of knowledge and wealth in the private sector empowered Japan’s ‘middling sort of people’, represented by the headmen and administrators of villages and towns as well as lower-status samurai. In contrast to the top-down structure of the Tokugawa political regime, in social and cultural terms these people formed a horizontal bond that can be classed as spiritual as well as functional, through their activities in scholarship, popular culture or commercial trading in addition to travelling

and letter-communication. These activities entailed creating their own identities in the space between ‘above’ and ‘below’.67

Secondly, gōnō studies offer useful but highly complex information about the land acquisition of members of the rural elite and related financial issues in the provinces. Records concerning three generations of the Suzuki family, including Bokushi’s, seemingly supply an almost perfect example of the growth of landholdings in one paddy region. The family holdings increased from 11.6 koku in 1761 to eighty koku in 1820, and then to about 150 koku in 1839, as shown in Chapter Two. The rate of land transfer between villagers was conventionally thought to be a critical indicator of how severely the market economy affected the village social structure in the latter half of the Tokugawa period, with the village polarized into a small number of rich families and a large number of poor peasants. However, many studies now reveal a much more complex picture. Actual land-trading among peasants was not always the result of financial troubles on the part of the sellers, and land acquisition did not necessarily mean absolute possession of land. Nor did it guarantee the owner’s prosperity.68 Recent studies tend to stress that there remained in Tokugawa Japan elements of a community-based ‘moral economy’ rather than simply the strict application

68 Inui, for example, presents a detailed analysis of a gōnō household, demonstrating and interpreting the highly complex process of land acquisition: Inui, Gōnō ketei no shiteki tenkai.
of ‘political economy’, with regard to land transfer or contract implementation.\(^6\)

Thirdly, this thesis draws on studies of the cultural function of gônô families in terms of their practice of importing knowledge and information from cultural centres, networking among local intellectuals and promoting local culture. Shibata Hajime’s 1966 work was one of the earliest to recognize the gônô’s cultural function. More recently, Kobayashi Fumio has discussed the social function of the home libraries of members of the provincial elite, while Takabe Toshiko also analyses the library of a village headman in Echigo Province. Brian Platt’s study of three generations of a rural elite family emphasizes their function as an education provider for the locality.\(^7\) By situating Bokushi’s life in the context of development within the gônô stratum of social identity, economic status and cultural links, I will further clarify how he performed his role as one member of the Tokugawa provincial elite. In doing so, I will present a more fully human account of the life of a member of the gônô that goes beyond economic data and descriptions of political involvement and membership of cultural circles.

Another area of scholarly interest in Bokushi has been his beliefs and attitudes as the head of a gônô family. Walthall argues that Bokushi’s


family documents as well as those of other gōnō represent the family head’s overt effort to establish a certain ‘house style (kafu)’. For her, this ‘house style’ comprises ‘household history, its culture, and occupation’ as well as ‘certain sets of values and standards of behavior’ to be imposed on family members. Walthall is right to emphasize in those family documents ‘a desire on the part of their authors to develop and maintain a family tradition, to distinguish their families …, and to perpetuate not merely the family lands and lineage, but the family customs and the house style’.

However, it seems to me equally important to scrutinize the actual application and effectiveness of such family ideology in the lives of different family members and of subsequent generations. In ‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs’, Walthall emphasizes only ‘a desire on the part of’ those who wrote the family documents, while revealing elsewhere that other members took certain actions contradictory to the family ideology. For example, she discusses in ‘The Life Cycle of Farm Women’ Bokushi’s record of illicit affairs and adultery. I go one step further and critically examine how the writings of Bokushi, the family head, affected the behaviour of other members in the household or even his own mode of life. Recent studies of family issues in the Tokugawa period have highlighted the existence of deviance, resistance and conflicts among family members. It is much more difficult to present views of family members

---

72 Ibid., p. 478.
74 For example, Iwabuchi Ryōji, ‘Kinsei jōnō ni okeru “ie” to sein’, in Watanabe Takashi (ed.), Kinsei beisaku tansakuchitai no sonraku shakai, pp. 379-433; and Ōtō Osamu, ‘Fūfugenka, rikon to sonraku shakai’, in
other than the head because wives, children and servants usually do not have their own voices in the kind of family document examined in this thesis. However, Bokushi’s texts in fact did record a certain amount of grumbling, in which we can detect different views and even conflict under the one roof. In Chapter Three, my analysis of Bokushi’s family documents addresses these issues.

Bokushi’s ideas have also been discussed in the context of the emergence of the ‘self’ in early modern writing. Noboru Tomonari traces a trajectory of modern Japanese autobiographies which both reflected and contributed to the nation’s modernization process, identifying Bokushi’s essay, ‘Yonabegusa’, as one early example. He argues that modern autobiographies, including Bokushi’s, played a crucial role in ‘the construction of ideological discourses on modernity, such as those on the self, the family, the nation and the entrepreneurship’.75 Tomonari’s reading of ‘Yonabegusa’ as a gōnō autobiography situates Bokushi’s text within a broad framework of historical change in nineteenth-century Japan, particularly in relation to society and the economy. However, his argument lacks careful attention to issues relevant to Bokushi at the personal level or at any stage of his life other than that in which he wrote ‘Yonabegusa’. A crucial shortcoming is that he fails to compare ‘Yonabegusa’ to ‘Isho’, Bokushi’s last account of his self, family, business and life, which one

---

Watanabe Nobuo (ed.), *Kinsei Nihon no seikatsu bunka to chiiki shakai* (Kawade shobō shinsha, 1995), pp. 177-206.

writer calls the longest will in the world. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, a comparative reading of these two accounts shows that Bokushi’s thinking was more complex and more fragile than Tomonari suggests. After all, an autobiography is a written form of discourse that is produced under particular circumstances at a particular time of the author’s life. Thus it can hardly render an entire picture of the author’s thought or represent the totality of his or her experiences, as Tomonari’s analysis might be taken to imply.

Bokushi’s family documents have also provided historians with one example of Tokugawa-period commoners’ dilemma between the ‘ie’ principle and ‘self’-interest. Studies such as those by Sugi Hitoshi, for instance, have focused attention on Bokushi’s negotiation between his involvement in the arts and his commitment to the family business. Sugi notes that as cultural activities developed in provincial areas, those interested in the arts, like Bokushi, needed to justify and set limitations on their involvement in artistic pursuits. Bokushi’s ‘Yonabegusa’ contains many statements that perfectly express the attitude that Sugi and other historians call ‘gyōyo fūga ron’ or the principle of conditional approval of the arts as a leisure activity. The question remains, however, of to whom and why Bokushi expressed such a view on his involvement in the arts. We might also ask whether he himself obeyed his own strictures on this subject.

---
77 Sugi, ‘Kaseiki no shakai to bunka’, pp. 18-70, and Kinsei no chiiki to zaison bunka, pp. 41-43. Also see Takahashi Satoshi, Nihon minshū kyōiku kenkyū (Miraisha, 1978), esp. Chapter 4.
In Chapter Two, I will further discuss this issue in my analysis of Bokushi’s family documents.

Bokushi has been further identified by the historian Aoki Michio and the literary critic Hasegawa Masaharu as an early example of a local writer who expressed his own views about his own region. Aoki has discussed Bokushi’s geographical awareness in terms of the development of regional culture. He distinguishes *Hokuetsu seppu* from the conventional type of gazetteers on the grounds that it has ‘observational’ (*kansatsuteki*) perspective on the author’s own region. In other words, thanks to the growth in socio-economic linkages between ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’ or among provinces, Aoki argues, people like Bokushi gained the chance ‘to observe their own village from outside’, ‘to make objective comparisons’, and ‘to meet with people from various places’. All of these opportunities awakened Bokushi to a highly specific sensibility about his region, which differed from traditional ‘lyrical’ views of the landscape in snow. From a similar perspective, Hasegawa interpreted *Hokuetsu seppu* as ‘homeland literature’ (*kyōdo no bungaku*).

Discussions presented by Aoki and Hasegawa, however, lack careful examination of the process in which *Hokuetsu seppu* was produced. As is briefly acknowledged in a 2002 article by Tsuda Mayumi, who specializes

---


79 Aoki, ‘Chūbuishiki no mebae to yukigunikan no seiritsu’, p. 343.

Introduction

in Kyōzan’s work, *Hokuetsu seppu* was much more than Bokushi’s idea. I will further demonstrate in Chapter Six that *Hokuetsu seppu* was a collaboration between Bokushi and Kyōzan built on previous but unsuccessful attempts by Bokushi with other urban writers especially Bakin. Hasegawa completely disregards this fact, while Aoki at times overemphasizes Bokushi’s power and persistence in negotiating with his urban collaborators. For example, Aoki says that Bokushi rejected Bakin’s suggestion of ‘*Echigo seppu*’ for the title of their book, insisting on the term ‘Hokuetsu’ in lieu of ‘Echigo’, because Bokushi believed that ‘Echigo’ did not specifically indicate his own region, which was the real snow country. This is not true, as far as I can see from letters from Bokushi’s urban collaborators. ‘Hokuetsu’ was first used as part of the book title by Kyōden, and was then adopted by Kyōzan as well. Bokushi did not reject Bakin’s suggestion for the book title, or, in fact, anyone else’s. The truth is that the title ‘Hokuetsu seppu’ was decided by Kyōzan and one of the managers of the publishing house. Bokushi was later informed in a letter from Kyōzan.

Bokushi was also much more than the author of *Hokuetsu seppu*, a point that has been insufficiently recognized by Aoki and others. Consideration of Bokushi’s poetry and other writings demonstrates that his thinking was more complex than *Hokuetsu seppu* alone would suggest. There were overt differences in topics, for example, between *Hokuetsu seppu* and other personal documents produced by Bokushi, such as his

---

84 Ibid., p. 329.
family chronicle. Some of the main topics of *Hokuetsu seppu*, like ‘snowfalls’, ‘tragedies in the snow’ and ‘*chijimi* weaving and snow’, were of little concern in Bokushi’s other writings. This fact alone undermines any tight correlation between *Hokuetsu seppu* and Bokushi’s consciousness, and suggests that Bokushi was a more complex figure than has usually been recognized.

Turning to the field of literary studies, scholars have been impressed by the rarity or uniqueness of *Hokuetsu seppu* in terms of both its content and its form, observing its marked deviation from the pattern of established works. Konishi Jin’ichi, for example, regards *Hokuetsu seppu* as ‘a distinctive essay that excites sympathy in our hearts’ despite its form as a ‘zappitsu-essay concerning merely factual knowledge’. He argues that the reason ‘even contemporary people are moved’ by *Hokuetsu seppu*, unlike other essays of this type, is that embedded there is ‘Bokushi’s sparkling wish to tell the entire population of Japan about the reality of the snow country’. Again, these literary critics fail to pay careful attention to the fact that *Hokuetsu seppu* was produced jointly by Bokushi and Kyōzan, and to the complex ramifications of that fact.

Biographical studies of Bokushi have contributed much useful information about his life and character. Takahashi Minoru is the most knowledgeable and productive biographer of Bokushi, and his research has provided many authors with comprehensive information. Yet, his strong interest in literature tends to produce a concentrated focus on Bokushi’s texts and mentality, and to limit consideration of his socio-economic

---

background and broader historical conditions. To a greater or lesser extent, this tendency also exists in the works of other biographers such as Miya Eiji, Tamura Ken’ichi and Isobe Sadaji. This probably does not mean that these biographers lack interest in matters beyond _Hokuetsu seppu_ and closely related questions. However, in the commercial publications that most such biographers have produced, Suzuki Bokushi is inevitably described first and foremost as the author of _Hokuetsu seppu_ and last of all as, for example, a pawnbroker in a rural town. From the viewpoint of a modern general audience, there is a great gap between a nineteenth-century pawnbroker and the author of a unique book about the snow country of Tokugawa Japan, although the many faces of Bokushi actually included both.

In English, there has been only one biographical essay about Bokushi’s life: Walthall’s ‘The Life and Times of Suzuki Bokushi’, written in 1986 as the ‘Introduction’ to _Snow Country Tales_, an English translation of _Hokuetsu seppu_. Walthall skilfully sketches out how deeply Bokushi’s life was engaged with prevailing social and cultural trends despite his location in the provinces. She also emphasizes the point that Bokushi’s texts offer different world views or ways of being compared to perspectives based on ‘central’ figures, such as samurai or urban intellectuals, which have hitherto most influenced historical studies of Japan. Walthall clearly recognizes that ‘_Hokuetsu seppu_ vividly displays the mind of an early

---


nineteenth-century peasant entrepreneur’, who ‘had one foot in the intellectual camp of late-Tokugawa Japan and one foot in village culture’.\textsuperscript{88}

However, as a short introduction to \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} for English readers, this essay cannot depict what I believe to be the full complexity of Bokushi’s life. Walthall explains in an orderly and instructive manner what happened in Bokushi’s life and what he did and how; however, the task of explaining fully why Bokushi was able to make something happen, and to what extent he and his book were distinct from other provincials and their literary works, remains to be done. His experiences in fact resulted from a jumble of general social conditions, his own personal milieu and historical accidents, just as Walthall showed to be the case with Matsuo Taseko in her 1998 book, \textit{The Weak Body of a Useless Woman}. In other words, we need to relate Bokushi’s experiences to factors in his environment such as the development of social infrastructure, the economy, culture and literature in the provinces, and influences from people surrounding him. Without such detailed investigation, readers may have an unfounded impression that Bokushi was a unique figure amongst provincials, and that \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} was similarly the only possible work of its kind. Bokushi’s life and context thus require deeper and wider analysis.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

It is the central argument of this thesis that in his interaction with his social environment, Bokushi’s life epitomises both the potentiality and the restraint of his historical moment for a well-placed member of the rural elite.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. xlviii.
An examination of Bokushi’s life and texts certainly challenges residual notions of the rigidity of social boundaries between the urban and the rural, between social statuses, and between cultural and intellectual communities. But his own actions and attitudes also show the force of conservative social values in provincial life, especially with regard to household rules and work ethics. It is also clear that his activities were still restrained by the external environment of Tokugawa society in terms of geographical remoteness, infrastructural limitation, political restriction, cultural norms and the exigencies of human relationships.

Therefore, I do not simply mean by the idea of ‘crossing boundaries’ that Bokushi’s activities were free from the limitations conventionally attributed to Tokugawa provincials. Indeed, I focus in part on Bokushi’s ‘redefinition of boundaries’ and even ‘reification of boundaries’ as a result of his involvement in inter-divisional activities. Engaging with the outside causes a resetting or discovery of one’s own identity. Knowing of the ‘centre’ gives rise to a stronger awareness of one’s ‘peripheral’ position. I argue that Bokushi’s life thus shows the paradoxical nature of the inter-divisional activities in which members of the provincial elite were able to participate thanks to the social developments of the late Tokugawa period.

I show that Bokushi was, in the end, an unadventurous adventurer within the continuing social structure. He both enjoyed and feared social change. Conventional social boundaries were weakening; but Bokushi was neither radical nor particularly ambitious in most senses. He did not lobby to be appointed as a village headman or to obtain samurai status; leave for Edo or Kyoto to join the literary world, academia or any political
movement; or even invest much money in large-scale commercial activities such as sake-brewing or commodity-trading. His caution is attributable to a mixture of his personality; his familial role as the first son and then the head of his household; the community culture of a conservative, small rural town; and, more than anything else, the fact that he lived his life in times that were not yet tumultuous.

All in all, Bokushi’s case exposes the ambiguities of life under the Tokugawa social and political order, especially in a period of significant though peaceful economic, social and cultural transformation, as well as the ambivalence of some individuals’ responses to that social transformation. His actions show that Tokugawa social frameworks were being shaken and reshaped, in his day at least, by people’s new attempts to cross conventional boundaries, within, however, a range of freedom that had both external and internal limits.

Bokushi is a rarity among rural inhabitants of Tokugawa Japan in terms of the survival and publication of his artistic work and domestic records. Bokushi’s writings and related material are collected in Suzuki Bokushi zenshū (Complete works of Suzuki Bokushi), published in 1983. This 1,425-page work in two volumes well represents Bokushi’s multifaceted identity as a member of the provincial elite. It consists of a wide range of written texts, as summarised below.
## Table 0.1: Texts collected in *Suzuki Bokushi zenshū*, two volumes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>type of text</th>
<th>length in this publication</th>
<th>year of completion (or period of writing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) prose works of literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><em>Akiyama kikō</em> (Journey to Akiyama)</td>
<td>Ethnographic account of Bokushi’s short trip deep into a valley community</td>
<td>104 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><em>Gesaku Akiyama kikō</em> (Story of a journey to Akiyama)</td>
<td>Story version of ‘Akiyama kikō’</td>
<td>60 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td><em>Shōsetsu Kōdaiji odori</em> (A tale of the Kōdaiji Temple dance)</td>
<td>Fictional historical love story based on a local legend</td>
<td>32 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td><em>Enya hangan ichidaiki</em> (The life of Lord Enya)</td>
<td>Historical fiction about a samurai lord in the fourteenth century (incomplete)</td>
<td>29 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(II) poetry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(III) family documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td><em>Yonabegusa</em> (Notes while burning the midnight oil)</td>
<td>Autobiographical essay aiming to edify Bokushi’s descendants</td>
<td>55 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><em>Betsubon Yonabegusa</em> (Another book of notes while burning the midnight oil)</td>
<td>A new and shorter version of the above text</td>
<td>16 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td><em>Eisei kirokushū</em> (Perpetual record)</td>
<td>Family history and household chronicle</td>
<td>90 pp.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td><em>Isho</em> (Final testament)</td>
<td>Bokushi’s notes to his son-in-law containing complaints and business advice as well as personal recollections</td>
<td>74 pp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (IV) Other Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td><em>Shokan</em> (Letters)</td>
<td>Letters from Bokushi to his correspondents (nine letters found by 1983)</td>
<td>20 pp.</td>
<td>1834-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td><em>Takizawa Bakin shokanshū</em> (Letters from Takizawa Bakin)</td>
<td>Six letters from Bakin to Bokushi written in 1818</td>
<td>82 pp.*</td>
<td>comp. 1836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td><em>Santō Kyōzan shokanshū</em> (Letters from Santō Kyōzan)</td>
<td>Twenty-four letters from Kyōzan to Bokushi written between 1829 and 1836</td>
<td>82 pp.*</td>
<td>comp. 1836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td><em>Eitai kōshinchō</em> (Perpetual record of Kōshin society)</td>
<td>Social group’s notebook recording various matters, current and past</td>
<td>21 pp.*</td>
<td>1824-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td><em>Harimazebyōbu kunidokoro seimeichō</em> (Addresses of authors and artists represented on the art collage screens)</td>
<td>List of poets and artists whose works were displayed on Bokushi’s folding screens (<em>byōbu</em>) of art collage</td>
<td>24 pp.*</td>
<td>1822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td><em>Kumoi no kari – Bokushi ate raikan mokuroku</em> (Address books – wild geese in the cloud, addressed to Bokushi)</td>
<td>List of senders of letters or cards in Bokushi’s letter collection</td>
<td>20 pp.*</td>
<td>1802-?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td><em>Shūgetsuan hokkushū</em> (Shūgetsuan [Bokusui] haikai selection)</td>
<td>Haikai and haikai-travelogues by Bokushi’s father</td>
<td>61 pp.*</td>
<td>Compiled by Bokushi in 1821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td><em>Shūgetsuan, Utao tsuizenshū</em> (Poems dedicated to the late Shūgetsuan [Bokusui] and Uta)</td>
<td>Haikai and Chinese poems that Bokushi received on the deaths of his father and his own wife, Uta</td>
<td>8 pp.*</td>
<td>Compiled by Bokushi in 1821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the texts marked by an asterisk* are printed in double columns and in a smaller font than the others.

This list is testimony to the variety of Bokushi’s interests and activities in the areas of literature and communication as well as domestic and community matters. Apart from *Hokuetsu seppu*, he wrote four prose texts: two ethnographic accounts that depict his journey to an isolated community in a deep valley, and two historical tales. Comments by
Bokushi within these texts suggest that he was thinking of trying to publish these four pieces of work in addition to *Hokuetsu seppu*. In poetry and painting, which for Japanese practitioners of the arts as well as their Chinese counterparts were more traditional fields than prose, Bokushi also exemplifies the variety of styles and topics practised in the provinces. His collections of material confirm that *haikai* was the dominant style of poetry among literate people in the provinces in those days, but at the same time they show that Bokushi had at least a basic capacity to compose Chinese poems (*kanshi*) on the traditional side as well as *kyōka* (satirical poems) on the contemporary side. The topics he chose are classic ones in early modern poetry, including natural beauty and seasonal scenes. His love poems show a different aspect of his character, compared to the sober and moral image projected in his Confucian didactic essay, ‘Yonabegusa’. The same contrasting mixture is also seen in the paintings collected at the Suzuki Bokushi kinenkan (Suzuki Bokushi Museum) in his hometown of Shiozawa. Ranging from maps, to Chinese-style landscapes, to portraits of a courtesan, his paintings well display the range of his interests.

Bokushi’s address books present a good picture of his communication network, which was extensive in terms of both geographical spread and social strata. The people in the list range from famous artists in Edo or Kyoto to local amateur poets, from legendary priests to travellers. Their locations cover the majority of provinces, as we will see later.

Letters to and from Bokushi complement these address books. Although the quantity of surviving letters is very small in comparison with

---

those lost, the extant letters from or to Bokushi still constitute important evidence of the actual state of people’s communication in the early modern period. The most important sources in this regard are letters Bokushi received from Bakin and Kyōzan, seven of which survive as ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, and twenty-four as ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’. Both collections provide a great deal of information about urban-rural relationships among figures in the arts in general, and specifically about the process of producing Hokuetsu seppu. I also use Bakin’s letters to other correspondents as well as his diaries, reproduced in other publications.90

Finally, Bokushi also left substantial texts concerning his family, household and community. ‘Yonabegusa’, his autobiographical essay, is the one most often referred to by researchers who emphasize that Bokushi was a strongly moral family head, as is believed to have been typical of gōnō farmers. However, this text covers only part of Bokushi’s life both temporally and mentally, because he wrote the manuscript at fifty-five years of age, as household head, and with the specific intention of edifying his descendants. He even had a vague ambition to publish this essay with the assistance of Kyōzan.91 His ‘Isho’, on the other hand, shows a very different face of Bokushi: here he is a seventy-year-old stroke victim, bitterly resentful at the way he had been treated by his family, which was now led by his son-in-law. In fact, the compilers of Suzuki Bokushi zenshū faced severe opposition to their plan to include ‘Isho’ in the publication

91 ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, SBZ2, p. 335.
from a descendant of Bokushi, who obviously did not want his great ancestor’s honour to be downgraded.92

Suzuki Bokushi zenshū thus has great merit in displaying the different identities and phases of Bokushi’s life. Further variety is provided by ‘Eisei kirokushū’ (Perpetual record) and ‘Eitai kōshinchō’ (Perpetual record of the Kōshin Society). The first is a chronicle in which Bokushi wrote his family history over ten generations up to 1817, and then added various entries on an annual basis until 1828, in order to provide his descendants with a record of the family. The latter is a meeting notebook shared by members of a community group to which Bokushi belonged. The notes were written from 1824 to 1828, by Bokushi and some of his fellow members. These two documents are useful sources in the attempt to reconstruct Bokushi’s experiences and attitudes because they serve as a counterpoint to the less factual and more emotional ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Isho’.

As I have argued, it is crucial to situate Bokushi’s experiences in broader contexts, beyond the sources he produced himself. Thus I also use published histories of local towns, cities and prefectures compiled by their municipal offices. I have surveyed the official histories of some thirty cities, towns and villages in Niigata Prefecture as well as the prefectural histories of Niigata, Fukushima and Nagano. Particularly useful are profiles of members of local elites and intellectuals, data on economic activities, and

family and village records as well as documents submitted to or received from the bakufu or han authorities.  

Bokushi’s life and its relation to his social environment will be examined thematically over six chapters. In each chapter, I focus on specific Tokugawa-period social boundaries, in connection with which Bokushi’s actions and attitudes offer new perspectives compared to existing understandings.

Chapter One concerns Bokushi’s geographical location and his awareness of the outside world. It problematizes established binary notions of the division between rural villages and the urban centres of Tokugawa Japan. The chapter shows how Bokushi contended with the social constraints that resulted from the geographical considerations impinging on a resident of the rural post-town of Shiozawa at this time. This chapter also provides subsequent chapters with a general introduction to the location and time of Bokushi’s life.

Chapter Two explores the dynamism of the rural economy in this period, and Bokushi’s own specific business activities. The chapter questions the actual efficacy of conventionally-understood boundaries between agrarian villages and towns inhabited by consumers, between

93 In this thesis, I use the Japanese terms ‘bakufu’ and ‘han’, referring to the central government and domain governments in the Tokugawa period, and ‘shogun’ and ‘daimyo’ for the respective heads of those governments. For the political system of Tokugawa Japan, see, for example, John W. Hall, ‘The Bakuhan System’, and Harold Bolitho, ‘The Han’, both in John W. Hall (ed.), Early Modern Japan, vol. 4 of The Cambridge History of Japan, pp. 128-82, pp. 183-234 respectively.
Introduction

farmers and merchants, and between business people and those active in the arts. Bokushi was a landlord and pawnbroker in a rural town, and his economic activities provide an example of the ways in which wealthy rural households negotiated with continuing economic transformation in farming areas in the Tokugawa period.

Chapter Three examines Bokushi’s interaction with the growing concept of ‘ie’ or the household, and the dilemmas experienced by him and other family members who were torn between increasingly powerful household norms on the one hand, and individual desires on the other. This chapter poses a question about the authority of household norms over individual lives in Tokugawa-period families, by focusing on the mixture of conformity and disagreement, and the composite of devotion to both ‘ie’ and self-interest, that existed under the one roof.

Chapter Four describes Bokushi’s development into a significant member of the provincial artistic elite. His activities indicate the weakening of boundaries in this respect between recognized intellectuals like priests and scholars, and ordinary villagers, and also the narrowing gap in cultural opportunities between urban-dwellers and wealthy provincial people. Members of the provincial elite like Bokushi took advantage of newly available opportunities to learn artistic techniques, and so narrowed their distance from urban centres in terms of knowledge and artistic skills.

Chapter Five analyses Bokushi’s letter-writing and communication network. Here I discuss the extent, methods and content of his correspondence with other rural and urban artistic figures. The scale of Bokushi’s correspondence contradicts conventional beliefs about the
limitations of provincial people’s communication networks, and about lack of communication between urban professional practitioners of the arts and rural amateurs. Naturally, however, Bokushi’s ability to communicate was affected by the constraints of social infrastructure and hierarchical human relations in the early modern context. The contents of letters from or to Bokushi also provide a good indication of the interests and concerns in that era of Bokushi and his peers.

The last chapter analyses Bokushi’s engagement with the publication project that resulted in *Hokuetsu seppu*. His experience well indicates the latitude for cultural negotiation between a provincial amateur writer and certain urban professionals, showing to what extent Bokushi was able to participate in their activities, and where he was not invited to do so. In this chapter I offer to historical studies of Japan a fresh account of how a commercial publication was produced at Edo in the 1830s involving a rural amateur, an urban author and an urban publisher.
Chapter One

**Beyond the Locality:**

*Bokushi’s Life in a Rural Post-Town*

This chapter explores the foundation of Bokushi’s capacity to bridge the geographical gap between centre and periphery. Bokushi’s significance in historical studies is largely due to the fact that despite his remoteness from urban centres, he successfully published *Hokuetsu seppu* in Edo as a result of his close communication with popular urban authors. To put it simply, Bokushi is an important object of study for his contrasting attributes: geographical remoteness from and cultural connectedness to the urban centres of the nation in the early modern context. In addition, however, he is also important because he helped to invent remoteness itself as a literary topic.

Bokushi’s experiences in a rural post-town in the late Tokugawa period expose the increasing permeability at this time of the geographical boundaries between centres and peripheries in terms of information flow and people’s actual mobility. His town functioned as one small node on the information network connecting urban centres and rural communities. I argue that it was this growing link between his town and the cities, as well as the increasing opportunities to learn about and travel to other places, that not only allowed Bokushi to participate in urban culture, but also nurtured his consciousness of the distinctive geographical features of his rural region, and his view of how to relate his region to the larger matrix of Japanese geography at that time.
In this chapter, I outline, firstly, the changes that were occurring in Bokushi’s region in the early modern context. I am thus able to present a more complex picture of that snowy, remote area than the one that is generally offered, illustrating the ways in which the region was strengthening its links with national centres. Secondly, I examine Bokushi’s hometown, Shiozawa, to clarify what functions and characteristics this small rural town offered its residents in comparison with ordinary agricultural villages and with large cities. Thirdly, I focus attention on Bokushi’s information network, showing what sort of information he was able to access and to whom his connections extended from his base in the rural town. And finally, I examine Bokushi’s travels as important opportunities for the development of his sense of a regional identity. I argue that travel was particularly significant in encouraging Bokushi to reflect on and present his own home in relation to urban culture.

**Bokushi’s Home Region**

Bokushi spent his entire life in a town situated in a basin at the foot of the Mikuni Mountains in the southeast corner of Echigo Province (see Maps 0.1 and 0.2). These mountains, which were around 2,000 metres in height, are part of the range dividing the Echigo Plain on the Sea of Japan side from the Kantō Plain on the Pacific Ocean side in the middle of Honshū, Japan’s main island. In winter, there is a clear difference in climate between the two sides of Honshū. Modern meteorology explains that cold wind from Siberia absorbs much moisture while moving over the Sea of Japan, and this wet north-westerly wind produces massive snowfalls on the Echigo side when it
hits the mountains. The wind then becomes dry and blows towards the south-east, where the capital city of Edo was located. Due to this meteorological condition, in winter, the neighbouring provinces of Echigo and Kōzuke (present-day Gunma Prefecture) were renowned for two contrasting phenomena: Echigo’s snow and Kōzuke’s dry wind. In this sense, Bokushi’s region was located at the border between the ‘snow’ and the ‘dry’, or ‘north’ and ‘south’, in the broad terms of the physical geography of Japan.

_Hokuetsu seppu_ draws attention to this binary opposition for an audience in Edo and other cities, using such terms as ‘_dankoku_’ (warm provinces) and ‘_kankoku_’ (cold provinces), or ‘_yukiguni_’ (snow country) and ‘_hanka no danchi_’ (prosperous, warm land). About the ‘prosperous, warm land’, it says:

When snow falls, … [people] delight in the lovely landscape, arrange for feasting and music, and amuse themselves by painting pictures and composing poetry on the theme of snow.

… [These] are only pleasures in lands where snow is scarce.

---

1 See, for example, Nakaya Ukichirō, _Yuki_ (Iwanami shoten, 1994), pp. 21-22.
In stark contrast, *Hokuetsu seppu* depicts Bokushi’s region as the place that ‘has the deepest snowfall in all Japan’, ‘more than twenty feet accumulating in the winter’.\(^4\) It also explains:

Six, seven, or even ten feet of snow may accumulate at certain places in a single day. From ancient times until the present day, there has never been a year when such snows have failed to fall, and we cannot even in our dreams imagine watching the first snowfall, celebrating and commemorating it in pretty verses as the people of warmer lands do.

‘Another year under the snow!’ – that’s the sad thought with which we who were born in this frigid land greet the first snowfall.\(^5\)

Meanwhile, from a traditional perspective, this region was arguably on the border between what was considered to be the ‘civilized west’ and ‘barbaric east’. The name of the province of Echigo derives from ‘Koshi’, an ancient label for the north-eastern part of the Sea of Japan coast dating from the fifth century or earlier, which meant ‘out there’ from the viewpoint of the dominant Yamato people based in the Nara area.\(^6\) Along with the

\(^4\) HS-Iwanami, p. 172. The translation is taken from SCT, p. 164. It was, however, unlikely even in the premodern period that the depth of snowfall in Shiozawa reached over twenty feet, except for places high in the mountains. Data provided by Shiozawa Town Council show that the maximum depth of snowfall in a season in the town ranged from seventy cm to 365 cm in the period 1977-98, making the average 209 cm (6.86 feet) (http://www1.ocn.ne.jp/~shiomati/guidance/ accessed on 25 August 2000).

\(^5\) HS-Iwanami, p. 25. The translation is taken from SCT, p. 11.

\(^6\) With the development of the northern frontier, the ancient central administration had divided Koshi into three provinces, Echizen (present-day Fukui prefecture), Etchū (present-day Toyama prefecture), and Echigo, by the end of the seventh century. See, for example, Tanaka Keiichi et al.,
expansion of the Yamato dynasty’s sovereignty, the border of ‘civilization’ moved eastward. Around the eighth century, for example, Echigo Province was seen as a northern frontline protecting the central polity against the north-eastern barbarians. Of course, such apparent territorial borders gradually vanished in the long process of national unification; but many discussions in cultural anthropology and history still point to an east-west dividing line somewhere around the Echigo area. The perceived position of Echigo Province on the border between the south-western and north-eastern cultural spheres is also confirmed in ethnological studies in terms of different linguistic features, community and family structures.

Given this accepted cultural division between ‘west’ and ‘east’ as well as the geographical ‘north-south’ divide mentioned above, Echigo Province was likely to be identified in traditional mainstream geographical discourse as part of the ‘close outer’ region. In other words, it can be said that Echigo was located ‘out there’, but within range of a ‘common political regime’. Although such a concept is vague and relative, it does draw attention to the two-sidedness of Echigo’s historical image. Further, as I will argue more fully below, the perceived position of Bokushi’s province in these terms seems intimately related to his realization of the distinctiveness

---


7 Tanaka Keiichi et al., Niigataken no rekishi, pp. 52-54.

8 See, for example, Aoki Michio (ed.), Higashi to nishi, Edo to kamigata, vol. 17 of Nihon no kinsei (Chūō kōronsha, 1994).

of his home region, a realization that resulted from sharing knowledge with people from outside his area.

In terms of social transformation, Echigo Province experienced considerable change in the early modern period. Such change took place, in essence, in the process of its integration into the national economy and national political regime, although, as Kären Wigen has demonstrated for another region, local variety and temporal differences did exist.\(^\text{10}\) One crucial early modern change related to the provision of infrastructure such as highways (\textit{kaidō}) and post-station (\textit{shuku eki}) systems and ocean and river transport systems, which greatly contributed to the making of a centralized economy and to political unification under Tokugawa rule. The development of highways and post-stations was initiated by \textit{sengoku} daimyo in the late sixteenth century for military and commercial purposes. After further development during the national unification process under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Tokugawa bakufu showed more enthusiasm in standardizing the national transport system.\(^\text{11}\)


Bokushi’s region was one area that experienced a great deal of this type of development, despite its geographical remoteness at the foot of the mountains. In the effort to standardize the highway system in his area, the Tokugawa bakufu took the initiative in improving the Mikuni Highway between Echigo and Közuke Provinces. The highway traversed the mountains that divided the two provinces; the highest point on the road was about 1,400 metres above sea level. The Mikuni Highway was then connected to the Nakasendō Highway taking travellers south to Edo or west to Kyoto (see Map 0.2). Eighteen places were formally designated as post-stations on the Echigo section of the Mikuni Highway, including Shiozawa Village. The post-stations were situated, on average, every eight kilometres along the highway in order to provide accommodation and transportation services for travellers.\(^\text{12}\) In addition, a river-boat transport system was developed between Muikamachi, the next post-station to Shiozawa, and the castle town of Nagaoka, where there was then a connection to another service line to the port town of Niigata. Rice, both for tax paid to the bakufu and han and for sale at markets, and various other commodities, were transported by these boat services.\(^\text{13}\)

Bokushi was one of many people who used these transport systems, as I will demonstrate when discussing his own travels and other cultural and business activities. He was certainly well aware of such transport networks and the flow of commodities, people and information through them. An


1839 letter from Bokushi to a friend emphasizes the convenience of transport to his town, which was located ‘fifty-five ri [216 kilometres] from Edo’. From Muikamachi, which was ‘only twenty-eight chō [three kilometres] away from Shiozawa’, it was ‘sixteen ri [sixty-three kilometres] down to the castle town of Nagaoka by boat, then another sixteen ri down to the port of Niigata’. Bokushi continues, ‘many famous painters, calligraphers, writers and actors from Edo come along the Mikuni Highway down to Niigata Town’.14

Changes in political administration resulted in the emergence in this region of significant characteristics that were not typical of feudal rule as it is usually interpreted. The general understanding of provincial rule under the Tokugawa regime is that the total land-area of Japan was divided into the shogun’s land (baku-ryō), his bannermen’s fiefs (hatamoto-ryō), the daimyo domains (shi-ryō), imperial and aristocrat fiefs (kinri-goryō and kuge-ryō), and the fiefs given to shrines and temples (jisha-ryō).15 Emphasis has conventionally been placed on the rigidity of this territorial structure and the severity of border control in each domain. For example, Harold Bolitho writes that ‘For the majority of the common people, the only form of government they knew was provided by their han. Its borders, seldom if ever passed, formed the edge of their known world’.16 In reality, however, the structure was more complex and the barriers to people’s

15 See, for example, Takeuchi Makoto (ed.), *Tokugawa bakufu jiten* (Tōkyōdō shuppan, 2003), pp. 52-53, 194-95, 220-21, 266-67.
mobility were more permeable, at least as far as Bokushi’s area and time are concerned.

Bokushi’s region, Uonuma County, had been deeply affected by national politics. Bokushi himself produced a brief chronology of the rulers of Uonuma County from 1363 to 1827, listing eight daimyo houses and nineteen bakufu intendants (*daikan*) in charge of the county. According to this document, the changes in rulers of the county were as follows.¹⁷

Table 1.1: Changes in rulers of Uonuma County (1363-1827) as recorded by Bokushi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>period</th>
<th>governed by</th>
<th>daimyo house or bakufu agents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1363-1598</td>
<td>the Uesugi clan</td>
<td>the Uesugi family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1598-1610</td>
<td>Sakato han</td>
<td>the Hori family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1610-1615</td>
<td>Takada han</td>
<td>the Matsudaira family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615-1619</td>
<td>Nagamine han</td>
<td>the Makino family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619-1620</td>
<td>Takada han</td>
<td>the Matsudaira family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>Takaino han (Shinano Province)</td>
<td>the Fukushima family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1622-1623</td>
<td>bakufu</td>
<td><em>daikan</em> (Okamoto and Hiraoka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624-1680</td>
<td>Takada han</td>
<td>the Matsudaira family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681-1723</td>
<td>bakufu</td>
<td><em>daikan</em> (Oka → Ono → Toriyama → Suzuki → Nose → Hasegawa → Shibamura → Hino, Minobe and Tsuge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724-1755</td>
<td>Entrusted to Aizu han (Mutsu Province) by bakufu</td>
<td>the Matsudaira family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755-1763</td>
<td>bakufu</td>
<td><em>daikan</em> (Chigusa → Mano, Yamanaka and Kubo → Yokoo → Mano and Kubo → Miyamura)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁷ There is a similar but more detailed note in a document compiled by the district headman of Ojiya around the same time as Bokushi wrote in 1827. Bokushi might have copied the note. See ‘Ōjōya hiji nukigaki’, in Ojiyashi-shi henshū iinkai (ed.), *Ojiyashi-shi shiryōshū* (Ojiya, Niigata: Ojiyashi kyōiku iinkai, 1972), pp. 158-60.
1763-present (1827)  |  Entrusted to Aizu han by bakufu  |  the Matsudaira family

Compiled from ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in SBZ2, pp. 113-14. The names of bakufu intendants are in parentheses. Arrows indicate replacements of the intendants. Their terms of office ranged from two months to thirteen years.

The early changes in rulers of the county, between 1598 and 1624, clearly represent the unsettled politics at the beginning of the Tokugawa regime. Uonuma County was then governed by the Takada han for nearly six decades, before shogun Tsunayoshi (ruled 1680-1709) confiscated a large part of the han’s territory to punish the daimyo for his failure in adequately governing his vassals in 1681, after a public quarrel broke out between two factions.18 The county became part of the shogun’s land and was administered by bakufu intendants. But in 1724 the bakufu temporarily entrusted the administration of most of the Uonuma area to Aizu han under the system of ‘trust land’ (azukarichī), where the han authority took responsibility for taxation and judicial functions on behalf of the bakufu. Aizu han was a powerful daimyo house related to the Tokugawa clan, holding a 230,000-koku domain in the neighbouring province of Mutsu. This trust-land status of Uonuma continued during Bokushi’s lifetime, though it had temporarily changed back again to direct rule by the bakufu in the period 1755-63, before he was born.19

18 The 1681 incident is known as the ‘Echigo quarrel’ (Echigo sōdō), and was typical of daimyo house domestic conflict (oie sōdō) between factions. For this incident in relation to the shogun’s power, see Donald H. Shively, ‘Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the Genroku Shogun’, in Albert M. Craig and Donald H. Shively (eds), Personality in Japanese History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 92-93.
The trust-land status of Uonuma was significant, as it meant that there was less political intervention from either the bakufu or han in comparison with the normal situation in other domains, thus allowing greater freedom of various kinds, especially in economic activities. Administration of the trust land seems to have been of little benefit to the Aizu han, whose commission was as low as three per cent of the official yield of the land. Moreover, the power of the han in taxation and judicature had fixed limits. Documents compiled by Aizu han officials in 1754-55 contain several reports from the district magistrate (kōri bugyō) in charge of the trust land, including Uonuma County. These reports emphasize the difficulty of handling the trust land in comparison with the han’s own territory, in terms of land assessment for taxation, cost of running local offices, and problems in transportation and communication between the castle and the trust land across distance and geographical barriers.

The lack of a single dominant political power in Uonuma County may have allowed local people relative freedom in the allocation of their loyalty to political authorities. Bokushi’s writings suggest that he had loyalties to multiple samurai authorities, unlike what we might expect in a typical feudal relationship between people and their lord. To the authority of the bakufu and shogun, Bokushi’s writings display the deference typical of commoners in his day. He acknowledged bakufu authority as the supreme power in Japan, responsible for a prolonged period of prosperity.

---

and peace. In particular, he expressed a great sense of deference to the memory of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) as the founder of the current regime, and also to Bokushi’s own contemporary Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829), a renowned reformer and strong leader of the bakufu cabinet.22 Certainly such attitudes were common in the discourse of the age, as shown in texts by other authors.23 Personally too, Bokushi had many reasons to be grateful for the status quo under bakufu sovereignty. His achievements in acquiring economic assets and political status, and his pursuit of cultural activities, might not have been possible without a stable power structure.

In more concrete terms, Bokushi was politically close to the Aizu han authority through his duties in village administration relating to tax payment, law and order. His pawnshop business was also licensed by the Aizu han. As we will see in more detail later, Bokushi established a good relationship with the han’s district magistrates and intendants through his contribution to han finances, his service to the community and socialization with samurai officials. Bokushi’s loyalty to the lord of Aizu is further demonstrated in his writing of a brief history of this daimyo house.24

Bokushi was also close to Muramatsu han, a small domain government within Echigo Province. Bokushi’s relationship with Muramatsu han developed from his father’s business connection to the

---

22 See, for example, ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 458, 462-63.
24 ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in SBZ2, pp. 115-16.
daimyo house, which used the Mikuni Highway for travel between Edo and its own domain for the purpose of ‘alternate attendance’ (*sankin kōtai*).\(^{25}\) According to ‘Eisei kirokushū’, the family chronicle, Bokushi’s father had for a long time sold *chijimi* cloth to the Muramatsu daimyo house at a discount price. This service, together with other generous gifts from the Suzuki family to the daimyo, led to the offer to Bokushi and his father of pseudo-vassal status: that is, the privilege of wearing a pair of samurai swords and of using their own surname officially (*myōji taitō gomen*).\(^{26}\)

The Suzukis modestly declined the sword privilege but accepted the right to official use of their surname, and thereby became obliged to greet the daimyo of Muramatsu every time he passed through Shiozawa for ‘alternate attendance’\(^ {27}\). Bokushi also developed relationships with samurai officials of Nagaoka han, mainly through his cultural activities, as I will discuss below. It seems, however, that Bokushi’s right to official use of his surname applied only to his dealings with Muramatsu han, and did not extend to other samurai authorities. Bokushi’s surname, Suzuki, does not appear in official documents received from or submitted to Aizu han, for example.

---


\(^{26}\) Maruyama discusses several cases in which daimyo offered the privilege of wearing samurai swords and using surnames to commoners who financially assisted the daimyo’s ‘alternate attendance’. Maruyama, *Sankin kōtai*, pp. 231-34. However, all the cases in Maruyama’s book concern a commoner and daimyo in the same domain, unlike the case of the Suzukis and the daimyo of Muramatsu.

Bokushi’s region was also affected from a relatively early stage by the transformation of the early modern economy, despite the geographical remoteness and climate constraints that characterized Uonuma County. The economic development of the region in this period can be summarized as follows. In agriculture, the seventeenth century witnessed a great increase in rice production as a result of new land development, which was stimulated by demand for food from developing towns as well as from booming gold and silver mines. The bakufu authority carried out a cadastral survey (kenchi) of Uonuma County in 1682 after it confiscated this area from the Takada domain. This survey furthered agrarian reform because it basically abolished previous landownership and registered actual cultivators as taxpayers, prompting the rise of a great many small, independent peasant households. Such independent peasants played an important role in advancing the money economy in their area. To supply their needs, some villages were allowed by the authorities to establish commodity markets that were held regularly on specific dates in each month. From the 1670s onwards, Shiozawa was one of those rural market-places, continuing steadily to develop its commercial functions. The money economy of this region appears to have been considerably boosted by the growth of a cottage industry producing the hemp cloth called ‘Echigo chijimi’. Chapter Two will further examine the socio-economic impact of this local industry on villagers’ lives.

The abovementioned economic and social changes in Uonuma region can be traced in the history of Bokushi’s ancestors. According to his family chronicle, ‘Eisei kirokushū’, the Suzuki family derived from a vassal of the Uesugi (originally the Nagao until it was renamed in 1561) clan, a powerful daimyo house based in Echigo in the sixteenth century. In 1606, however, in the very early years of Tokugawa rule, the family was deprived of samurai status during the political turmoil after the Uesugi corps had been defeated by the Tokugawa-led allied forces. In 1609, the only remaining member of the Suzuki family, an orphaned son, moved to Shiozawa, where he lived under the care of a village headman and a local temple. It seems that the Suzuki family gradually grew in assets; however, the family lost nearly all its property in the abovementioned cadastral survey of 1682, probably because the land was not cultivated by family members themselves, as the family head and his wife had died at young ages, just before the land reform. The Suzuki family’s economic difficulties continued under the next head, who indulged himself in gambling and drinking. It was one further generation later that the family re-established its assets, thanks to Bokushi’s grandparents, who began their business by peddling sweets and then succeeded in commodity-trading between the 1720s and the 1740s.

This case-history seems an apt illustration of broader trends in the village. Due to economic transformation on the one hand, and political intervention on the other, there were dramatic rises and falls in people’s fortunes. And, ultimately, unforeseen happenings and personal attributes

---

also contributed to such vicissitudes. The Suzuki family’s metamorphosis from farmer to merchant, following the first change from samurai to farmer in the previous century, was clearly represented in physical form by their mercantile house, built in 1751 on the main street of Shiozawa. It had a shop stretching all the way over its wide, fifteen-metre frontage on the ground floor, according to Bokushi.31 A stark contrast between success and failure in the face of new economic opportunities is also seen in the next generation, in the behaviour of Bokushi’s father and uncle. I will discuss this situation in Chapter Two in the context of Bokushi’s economic practice.

The increase in people’s geographical mobility is another important aspect of the early modern transformation of this region. It is essential to note that the people of the region never had been still, even in the seventeenth century, despite Uonuma’s remoteness and the constraints imposed by heavy snowfalls. Historians have ascertained that migrants played an important role in the development of this region. Looking for new economic opportunities or other chances, people moved in and out of different places as cultivators, miners, merchants or, sometimes, village administrators.32 There were also runaway peasants who abandoned land and fled to somewhere else, especially in the early years of the Tokugawa period.33

33 At least five documents were issued by local daimyo between 1596 and 1622 ordering tighter border control to prevent villagers from running away. See Shiozawamachi (ed.), Shiozawachō-shi shiryōhen (hereafter SCS-S), vol. 1 (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawa machi, 2000), pp. 444-54.
However, mobility in the latter half of the Tokugawa period was certainly far greater, involving a large number of people who moved between Echigo and Edo for occupational reasons. Chijimi textile merchants were one important example. Another significant group was people who went to Edo for seasonal work. Evidence for such mobility includes the fact that bakufu and han authorities circulated orders in the 1790s in an attempt to restrict movement from villages in Echigo to Edo.\footnote{For example, NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 246-47.} Echigo villagers, together with people from Shinano Province, were typical seasonal migrant workers in the metropolis of Edo in the early nineteenth century; they were nicknamed ‘grey starlings’ (mukudori), meaning ‘dirty-looking hungry birds that migrate in flocks’.\footnote{Haga Noboru, *Edo jōhōbunkashi kenkyū* (Kōseisha, 1996), p. 85; Makoto Ueda, *Dew on the Grass: the Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 9.} Such mobility of labourers is also described in *Hokuetsu seppu*, which says that people ‘spend several years’ service in prosperous Edo [and] return to their home in Echigo when they’ve completed their term’.\footnote{HS-Iwanami, p. 31. The translation is taken from SCT, p. 20.} Kyōzan himself had one such servant from Echigo.\footnote{‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 304.} Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827), a famous haikai poet from Shinano, started his life in Edo as such a ‘grey starling’ at the age of fourteen. Issa’s village alone sent as many as thirty migrant labourers to Edo in 1797.\footnote{Ueda, *Dew on the Grass*, p. 9.}

Apart from such temporary migrants, many people from this region stayed permanently in the metropolis because of marriage or other reasons. Bokushi alone had three permanent migrants to Edo within his close circle: a niece, another relative and an old friend. The friend, especially, played an
important role in assisting Bokushi’s correspondence with Edo writers such as Bakin and Kyōzan, as we will see in Chapter Five. Bokushi’s texts also contain two examples of women from Edo who married into families in his region. One was the second wife of Bokushi’s nephew, and the other was the divorced wife of the village headman of Muikamachi, whom Bokushi took back home to Edo.  

Bokushi’s home region was undoubtedly remote from the ‘centre’; nevertheless, this region as well as others underwent considerable social and economic transformation in the early modern context. In addition to the changes examined above, the cultural transformation of the region is one of the major interests of this thesis, and will be extensively discussed in Chapters Four and Five with reference to Bokushi’s experiences in education, the arts and communication.

To examine further the factors that allowed Bokushi to connect to the ‘centre’ while remaining at a ‘periphery’, we will narrow the scope of observation and analyse the local community in which he actually lived.

**The Rural Town of Shiozawa**

Shiozawa in Bokushi’s day is best understood as a ‘rural town’ or ‘zaikata machi’ in the terms used in historical studies of Tokugawa Japan. Officially it was a village (*mura*) but people seldom called it ‘Shiozawa mura’ any more. Nor was the term ‘village’ used for Shiozawa in *Hokuetsu seppu* or other writings by Bokushi, except in cases where he copied out official

---

39 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 69, 94.
documents produced by political authorities. Otherwise, he referred to his home place as ‘Shiozawa’ without any administrative title, or ‘the post-station of Shiozawa’. Like others, Bokushi used the term ‘mura’ to refer to surrounding smaller communities.

The ‘rural town’ occupies an ambiguous position in writings on Tokugawa Japan, given the conventional dichotomy between rural ‘villages’ and urban ‘towns’. Studies of rural towns or zaikatamachi in the Tokugawa period are a relatively new and active area in Japanese history, filling a gap in conventional studies, which tend to concentrate on metropolises, castle cities, or villages. As is well known, the Tokugawa regime categorized commoners and their communities into only two groups. The vast majority of people who lived in ‘villages’ were given the status of ‘hyakushō’; the total number of ‘villages’ in Japan was recorded in 1722 as 63,976. Only those commoners who lived in places that were allowed the title of ‘towns’ (machi) were ‘chōnin’ or ‘townsmen’; the number of ‘towns’ is roughly estimated at 10,000. ‘Townsmen’ in Edo alone amounted to 1,678 in 1745.

In theory, the ‘village’ was understood, by and large, as a communal unit developed on the basis of agricultural production (or fishing in some cases). In contrast, the ‘town’ was regarded as an area initially constructed

---

40 An exceptional use of the term of ‘Shiozawa mura’ is found in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ in reference to an official document. See SBZ2, pp. 87-88.
by feudal authorities for specific purposes such as military use, political administration, commerce and transport, which then gathered a large population whose means of earning a living were separated from agricultural production. In reality, however, the distinction between ‘villages’ and ‘towns’ became increasingly unclear due to the emergence of town-like villages resulting from the development of the regional economy and social infrastructure, although the feudal authorities mostly maintained a theoretical administrative separation. In Uonuma County alone, it appears that eight places including Shiozawa developed into rural towns during the Tokugawa period as a result of a series of economic and infrastructural developments. These developments can be summarized as follows: the building of post-stations and highways (ca 1590-1610), improvement of river lanes and jetties (ca 1620-50), a silver rush at a mine known as Ueda (ca 1655- ), and the first chijimi-weaving boom (ca 1660-80).

Rural towns performed various functions for surrounding villages according to regional needs. Generally, a rural town in the Tokugawa period functioned as several of the following, if not all of them: market, post-station, small port for commerce or fishing, centre for commodity distribution, centre for production of a local speciality, centre for new land development, and local office of political authorities. In the case of Shiozawa, the town was a post-station on the Mikuni Highway, as mentioned above, located around fifty kilometres from the Echigo-Kōzuke border. Although there were five more stations between Shiozawa and the border. Although there were five more stations between Shiozawa and the

---

45 See Tanaka, Kinsei zaigōmachī no kenkyū, pp. 2-17.
border, Shiozawa was especially important as the last station located in the Uonuma basin before the route ascended through the mountains.\textsuperscript{46} In terms of political administration, Aizu han set up one of its local offices (jin'ya) at Shiozawa, mainly to allow for agricultural inspections and tax-collection.\textsuperscript{47} This office does not seem to have been particularly significant in appearance; however, it is important to note that its existence probably facilitated the exchange of information between samurai officials and local leaders, as we will see below. Another layer of administration was represented by the village-league or district system. Under the administration of Aizu han, 292 villages in Uonuma County were divided into seven village-leagues (kumi), with one ‘parent village’ (oyamura) in each group to act as a district centre. Shiozawa was one such district centre of a league of fifty-five villages.\textsuperscript{48}

Commercial functions in this rural town were developed as early as the end of the seventeenth century. A report of Shiozawa’s households and occupations in 1689 gives a clear picture of a small commercial centre.\textsuperscript{49} Among 167 households of hyakushō status, ninety-eight were partly or fully involved in non-farming jobs as carpenters, blacksmiths, dyers, commodity

\textsuperscript{46} See NKS-T, vol. 3, pp. 700-06.
\textsuperscript{47} The Aizu-han administration placed its local offices at Ojiya (head office), Koidejima and Shiozawa (branch offices) in order to administer Uonuma county, whose putative rice yield was approximately 70,000 koku. However, despite the size of the county’s rice yields, which were comparable with those of the domain of a middle-class daimyo, only four samurai officials were dispatched to the three local offices as office caretakers (jin'ya mori) (NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 15-26); therefore, I presume that the Shiozawa jin'ya was not likely to have had a samurai official on a permanent basis.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pp. 26-28. Some documents count fifty-eight villages for the Shiozawa league.
merchants and others. Ten wealthy households were engaged in inter-regional trading, dealing with merchants in the port of Niigata, the castle towns of Nagaoka and Takada, the neighbouring provinces of Kōzuke and Shinano, and even Edo. There were also three sake-brewers in this group of wealthy villagers. Small merchants accounted for thirty-nine households, of which twenty-nine peddled commodities in surrounding villages and another ten had businesses limited to Shiozawa. The commercial profile of this rural town was further strengthened with the growth of the local cottage industry of chijimi-weaving, as will be shown in Chapter Two.

The demographic and physical features of the rural town of Shiozawa are also important because they were closely related to the occupations and perceived identities of the residents. Naturally, the rural town had a much higher population density than surrounding villages. According to a report on the population, land and industry of Uonuma villages in 1755, Shiozawa had 242 households with a total of 811 residents, of whom 465 were male and 346 female. It was the fifth most populous ‘village’ among the 292 villages in the county, which had a total population of 84,909 people in 16,827 households. The average size of villages in Uonuma can be inferred from these figures as 291 people in fifty houses. By comparison, in 1854, the national average size of villages was

---

50 ‘Uonuma-gōri muramura no yōsu taigaisho’, in Ojiyashi-shi henshū iinkai (ed.), Ojiyashi-shi shiryōshū, pp. 355-538. Strictly speaking, this report, which was produced by Aizu han, excluded a small part of Uonuma County, where Nagaoka han ruled on behalf of the bakufu. Infants might have been neglected, as was often the case in this kind of survey, because of their high mortality rates. See, for example, Hayami Akira, Rekishi jinkōgaku de mita Nihon (Bungei shunjō, 2001), p. 52.

51 A letter from Bokushi to a friend in 1836 mentioned that the number of households in his town was now 400, although it is possible that he was exaggerating. ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 967.
said to be 404 residents. The Shiozawa district, consisting of fifty-five villages, had a population of 13,746, of whom 7,542 were male and 6,204 female, in 3,213 households. This district population roughly indicates the size of the community that the rural town of Shiozawa served, although a few subordinate commercial hubs also existed in other post-towns in the area. The post-town of Seki, for example, also had some commercial facilities.

Physically, as shown in Map 1.1, Shiozawa had the typical shape of a post-town, in which houses stood side by side on both sides of the main street over a considerable length. An 1805 document describes the town as stretching for about one kilometre north to south and for about 350 metres east to west.

---

52 See Yoshida, Seijuku suru Edo, p. 32.
Map 1.1: The rural post-town of Shiozawa

Legend

| A | the Suzuki household (known as the Suzuki-ya) |
| B | the transport centre (ton'ya-ba, toiya-ba), the Ōtsuka household |
| C | daimyo inn (honjin) and district headman house (ōjōya), the Inokuchi household |
| D | Aizu-han local office (jin'ya) |
| E | tax rice storehouse (okura) |
| F | the Chōonji temple (the Suzukis' family temple) |

Based on a 1682 document, ‘Tenna ni-nen Shiozawa ienamizu’, kindly provided by Shiozawa Town Council.
A spatial distinction between the rural town of Shiozawa and surrounding villages can be identified by comparing some of the illustrations in *Hokuetsu seppu*, which were drawn directly by Bokushi, or redrawn by the illustrator Santō Kyōsui (Kyōzan’s son) based on Bokushi’s drafts. The Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the town. The picture in Figure 1.1 seems to depict the main street of Shiozawa during the New Year’s holiday. It emphasizes a massive wall of snow at one side of the street. There are various kinds of people on the street. A priest is greeting a man in samurai-like clothing, who might be a village headman. Servants follow such elite people. A man is peddling something, and people are playing *hanetsuki*, a badminton-like game played during the New Year’s holiday, not using proper battledores but wooden snow-shovels. Had Bokushi himself been depicted in this picture, he might have looked like the man at the bottom-right corner: a wealthy townsman in formal dress wearing a short sword (*wakizashi*). The picture in Figure 1.2 was drawn by Bokushi and entitled ‘Snow Melting – Town Ward in the Fourth Month’. Meanwhile, the picture in Figure 1.3 by Kyōsui shows a peasant house in a village, probably near Shiozawa.
Figure 1.1: Illustration of ‘post-station’ (eki) in Hokuetsu seppu

Source: SCT, pp. 166-67

Figure 1.2: Illustration of ‘town ward’ (shi chū) in Hokuetsu seppu

Source: SCT, pp. 298-99
The architectural features of the houses in the rural town shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 can be compared to the peasant cottage in Figure 1.3. The houses of Shiozawa town ward were roofed with shingles weighed down with stones, unlike the peasant house with a thatched roof. This confirms Watanabe Kōichi’s observation about the distinction between towns and agricultural villages: according to Watanabe, shingled roofs were one of the symbolic features of ‘towns’ which distinguished them from ‘villages’, and ‘could be regarded as one of the status indicators between peasants and townsmen’. 55 Another typical feature of the rural town is seen on the façade of the houses in Figure 1.2. At the front on the ground floor, there seem to be shops, indicated by noren, shop curtains dyed with a trademark, hanging over the entrance. The Suzuki family’s house was

---

probably one such mercantile house on the main street of the town. These aspects of architectural design as well as the general appearance of the street and the variety of people in it arguably created a space that was clearly different from the surrounding rural landscape, which featured large areas of paddy fields and farming houses.

In sum, Shiozawa functioned as the meeting-point for an agrarian community, through which the residents were potentially connected to the outside world. In comparison with ‘real’ towns in the provinces like the port town of Niigata or the castle towns of Takada and Nagaoka, the urbanity of Shiozawa was insignificant. However, in terms of social and economic functions, landscape and the appearance of the main street, this community could probably no longer be classed as a farming village by Bokushi’s day. The functions and appearance of Shiozawa and other rural towns confirm that Tokugawa society cannot be understood in terms of simple dichotomies between urban and rural, between townsmen and peasants, or between centre and periphery. This issue will be further explored in the next section in terms of access to information, and also in later chapters in terms of residents’ sense of identity and cultural engagement.

**Bokushi’s Access to Information**

Many studies stress the dynamism characterizing the exchange of information within the metropolis of Edo in the late Tokugawa period.\(^5\)\(^6\)

---

\(^5\) For example, Yoshihara Kentarō, *Edo no jōhōya: Bakumatsu shominshi no sokumen* (Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 1978); Haga, *Edo jōhōbunkashi kenkyū*; Itasaka Noriko, ‘Edo no jōhōshakai’, *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to*
Though to a much lesser extent, the rural town was also the centre of information for its surrounding communities. It can be concluded that the relaying and distribution of information were especially vigorous in the post-towns on the major highways from Edo, as is stressed in studies by Maruyama Yasunari. In his terms, the post-town was a nexus on the information circuit, at which a ‘line’ (a highway) and an ‘area’ (a community) crossed each other.57

Living in the post-town of Shiozawa, Bokushi participated in such exchanges of information in every way: receiving from and sending to the outer world, and gathering from and distributing to his own community. A high level of competence in handling information was necessary for him, especially in enabling him to write about the snow country to authors in Edo, but also for his day-to-day business activities. Such competence involved the gathering, recording, storing, processing and sending of information. In fact, Hokuetsu seppu records a number of stories that Bokushi heard from members of his community. Other texts also indicate that he received various kinds of news items from Edo and other places, through a variety of channels.

I discuss below, first, the attributes of Bokushi that gave him an advantage in handling information; second, his channels of information; and third, the content and methods of his communication with others. I show that Bokushi was one of those privileged provincials who were able to

---

access and consciously engage with the information networks that were developing so rapidly, interlocking with the increasing human mobility and economic activities of his day. However, I also demonstrate that provincial people’s engagement with outside information has a longer history than is usually acknowledged. Well before Bokushi, some people in this region were already keenly aware of the importance of information exchange with the outside world for their economic activities and social life.

Among Bokushi’s advantages in terms of exchange of information, the first factor to consider is the Suzuki family’s proximity to the town centre as well as its conspicuous presence in the community. As shown in Map 1.1 above, Bokushi’s house, known as the Suzuki-ya (its trade name or yagō), was located in the vicinity of the post-station transport centre (toiyaba or ton’yaba) where the major tasks of the post-station were carried out. There, messages and parcels were relayed to the next station, horses and porters were arranged for travellers, and all the associated accounting and record-keeping was done.58 Such a location would have provided Bokushi with good access to information coming in and going out, official and unofficial. In addition, the house of the Suzuki-ya was undoubtedly conspicuous to local residents and visitors. The Suzuki family’s residential land occupied nearly two standard blocks, at 17.1 metres wide and 38.7 metres long.59 By contrast, the standard width of a residential block in rural

Chapter One: Beyond the Locality

towns like Shiozawa was between seven and nine metres. The presence of
the Suzuki-ya must have further impressed itself on people after Bokushi
rebuilt the existing house on this land in 1825, to create a large and lavish
dwelling, 16.2 metres wide by nine metres long.

Moreover, the business of the Suzuki-ya necessarily involved the
exchange of information with residents of Shiozawa and villagers in
surrounding areas. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, the Suzuki-ya’s
main business was as a chijimi merchant in the early days of Bokushi’s
father, from about 1760 to about 1768. The Suzuki-ya then turned into a
pawnshop during the lifetime of Bokushi, until his son-in-law shifted the
family business to sake-brewing around 1840. These commercial activities
would certainly have played a positive role in the family’s capacity to
collect information, as they involved various conversations and negotiations
with customers, who were likely to have been ordinary local people for the
most part. Some tales in Hokuetsu seppu were apparently collected in this
way. For example, in ‘The Merits of Winter Asceticism’, Bokushi writes: ‘a
man from Tanaka [village] who to [sic] frequently comes to my home told
me this tale’.

Bokushi’s family status also provided him with good channels to the
local elite and the samurai class. Bokushi’s official status remained that of
hyakushō until he was awarded the provisional status of elder (toshiyori-
kaku) in 1822 and full status as an elder (toshiyori) in 1824. The status of

---

60 See Horinouchimachi (ed.), Horinouchichō-shi tsushihen, vol. 1
62 SCT, p. 137.
63 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 82, 87.
elder allowed him to act officially as a councillor for Shiozawa in political decision-making and various administrative matters. Yet, even well before the promotion, he was already working closely with the headman and elders of Shiozawa. With a good family background and current economic prosperity, Bokushi often played the role of ‘sewanin’ (coordinator), whether officially or not, in, for example, supplying cheap rice to poor peasants and entertaining samurai inspectors, as well as organizing local religious and cultural events. His performance as a useful administrator for the Shiozawa community must have kept him informed of various kinds of news, especially news from the samurai class.

Turning to Bokushi’s channels of information, most remarkable was his network of literary friends, which will be examined in detail in Chapter Five. Apart from these correspondents, Bokushi and other residents of Shiozawa would have heard news from people travelling along the Mikuni Highway. Bokushi’s writings alone mention a wide range of travellers on the highway, including chijimi merchants heading for Edo, farmers exporting rice to Kōzuke Province, groups of pilgrims to Ise, couriers carrying letters and parcels, artists and poets from Edo, priests and monks, daimyo and their vassals on the way between their domain and Edo as well as bakufu officials on duty. Bokushi’s texts confirm that his sources of news included his literary friends, couriers, travellers and fellow members of the local elite, as well as samurai officials. In one example, Bokushi learnt about a famine in Mutsu Province in 1833 through a letter from a

64 See ibid., pp. 24, 31, 33, 36, 58, 60, 63.
65 All these appear in ibid.
friend in Hachinohe in that province.66 In 1827 Bokushi obtained a copy of an imperial edict about the court promotion of shogun Ienari (ruled 1783-1837) to the rank of premier (dajō-daijin) when he stayed at the house of a village headman in Tōkamachi.67

Encounters with members of the samurai class can be considered an important channel of information. Bokushi’s texts show how his artistic knowledge assisted him to establish good relationships with samurai. For field inspection (kemi) and other business, Aizu han dispatched a district magistrate or an intendant to Uonuma villages on an annual basis. Bokushi’s writings suggest that he was especially well treated by samurai officials, because of his knowledge of poetry and the arts as well as his generous hospitality. Almost every year from 1817 to 1838, Bokushi was invited to meet a superintendent or intendants from Aizu han at the Shiozawa office or the Ojiya office. On a typical occasion, Bokushi would receive a certificate of merit for his contribution to the community along with a small gift like a fan; and, in return, he would present some artistic work as well as more generous gifts.68

Bokushi’s meetings with officers of the Muramatsu han and Nagaoka han took place when the Suzuki family offered overnight accommodation or lunch to the daimyo’s doctors or secretaries (yōnin) on their journey for ‘alternate attendance’. The Suzuki family accommodated three to nine people from Nagaoka han or Muramatsu han on each of their

66 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 966.
68 See ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 64-65, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73-74, 78, 82, 85, 87, 90, 95, 97-98, and ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 804-06.
journeys for ‘alternate attendance’.

On at least one occasion, Bokushi’s artistic hobbies clearly worked to bridge the gap in social status. A doctor from Nagaoka han who stayed with the Suzuki family asked his lord, on Bokushi’s behalf, to write a poem (san) on a painting (ga) by Bokushi. This was a traditional form of artistic collaboration between painting and poetry, which normally would not have happened between persons of such different status as daimyo and commoner. Bokushi recorded the doctor’s comments that this highly unusual arrangement was made possible because the daimyo showed an interest in artwork by Bokushi that was displayed in the daimyo inn (honjin) in Shiozawa. The doctor said, ‘it happened because my lord, you and I are all men of furyū’ (aesthetics).

Similarly, with bakufu officials, Bokushi also took advantage of his cultural knowledge to claim instant acquaintanceship. One such occasion was his meeting with the shogun’s itinerant inspectors (junkenshi) in 1789. Bokushi impressed the inspectors with his knowledge of local history as well as his consideration in presenting them with a rare stone (kiseki) found in the locality. Collecting rare stones, odd in shape or pattern, was a relatively new and increasingly popular hobby among cultured people of that time, and Bokushi knew that the inspectors were interested in such stones.

---


70 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 84.

71 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
stones in addition to their official business. *Hokuetsu seppu* also includes a few tales related to rare stones.\(^{72}\)

Bokushi’s notebook, ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, offers good examples of the sort of news Bokushi and his peers in Shiozawa were receiving from people beyond their locality. This notebook belonged to a social group consisting of ten members of the elite class in Shiozawa including the headman, a priest and wealthy farmer-merchants like Bokushi.\(^{73}\) Some items of information that they recorded in the notebook apparently came from outside the locality, although only a few entries identified the source of news. The topics are not very different from modern news coverage, ranging from natural and man-made disasters to national and regional politics, to extraordinary happenings or discoveries.

The disasters recorded included a fire that destroyed the famous Higashi Honganji Temple in Kyoto in 1823, floods in the provinces of Mikawa and Mino (present-day Aichi and Gifu Prefectures) along the Tōkaidō Highway in 1828, an earthquake that hit the middle part of Echigo Province in 1828, and an enormous typhoon disaster in Kyūshū, also in 1828.\(^{74}\) In political news, some items were direct copies of official notices (*kaijō*) from Aizu han: for example, a notice about a restriction on sake-brewing.\(^{75}\) Others sound like information from an ‘insider’, probably an Aizu han samurai. For instance, a friend of Bokushi’s wrote in 1826 that Aizu han was currently in financial trouble because of expenditure relating to its daimyo’s promotion in court rank; therefore, the han would ask people

\(^{72}\) See HS-Iwanami, pp. 226-38; SCT, pp. 215-27.

\(^{73}\) ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in SBZ2, p. 104.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., pp. 108-09, 118-19.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., p. 112.
for a contribution (myōgakin), and, in return, it was ready to offer generous contributors the privilege of wearing samurai swords or using their own surnames officially.\textsuperscript{76} Bokushi’s contribution of fifty ryō to an earlier loan to Aizu han had led to the award of toshiyori status to him in 1822, mentioned above. By this time, the members of the rural elite in this area knew the mechanisms of the give-and-take relationship between them and the han authority. The note by Bokushi’s friend seems to suggest the group’s reluctance rather than willingness to respond to such a request for money from Aizu han.

Naturally, people were interested in social news or any extraordinary discoveries, happenings, crimes and historical matters, whether the reports about them were true or not. For example, ‘Eitai kōshinchō’ contains news of a giant man in Higo Province (present-day Kumamoto Prefecture), who was reportedly 230 centimetres in height and 195 kilograms in weight. He apparently ate 4.5 litres of rice grain and drank 5.4 litres of sake while the daimyo of Kumamoto was watching him.\textsuperscript{77} Another news item concerns a farmer’s discovery of an enormous number of gold bars (67,500 kilograms, worth 2.8 million ryō) in Shimōsa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture), the veracity or otherwise of which I cannot confirm from any other references.\textsuperscript{78} Also copied, but dubious, is a letter claimed to be the work of Enomoto Kikaku (1661-1707), a legendary haikai poet and disciple of Matsuo Bashō (1644-94), describing his involvement in the famous vendetta

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 111.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 117. The news of this giant man is also recorded in journals by Fujioka-ya Yoshizō (1793-?), a famous collector of all kinds of hearsay in Edo. See Suzuki Tōzō, Edo kōdan Fujioka-ya banashi (Chikuma shobō, 2003), pp. 172-73.
\textsuperscript{78} ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in SBZ2, p. 121.
of the ‘forty-seven rōnin of Akō’ in 1702. Letters from Bokushi to his correspondents also offer examples of social news. A letter in 1839, for example, recounts an international incident (‘China made an unreasonable demand on Ryūkyū’), a cruel crime (‘A man was executed in Edo for killing many of his adopted children by poisoning’), a case of corruption (‘Many officers of the Kantō police and their assistants have been jailed for extorting money from villagers’), and an example of political satire (‘A poem was put on the gate of the office of the Edo city magistrate’).

Besides ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, it is understood that Bokushi kept notes about incidents and news stories heard from his various sources in a notebook called ‘Shinko oboechō’ (Notebook of the old and new), although the original has not survived. By referring to this notebook, for example, he was able to make a summary of fire disasters in the year 1828, listing twelve incidents in Echigo and Aizu.

The accuracy and degree of detail of news recorded in Bokushi’s texts varied. Some items were brief and likely inaccurate, as shown in some of the instances above. Other examples indicate, however, a great deal of interest in the detail of the incidents reported among those provincial people who relayed information to others. In the news about the earthquake in Echigo mentioned above, Bokushi recorded the details of the damage in seven towns and thirty-nine villages, referring to the numbers of deaths and

---

79 Ibid., p. 116. It is believed that Kikaku’s relationship with the ‘forty-seven rōnin’ was later exaggerated and embroidered. See, for example, Shibata Shōkyoku, Shōmon no hitobito (Iwanami shoten, 1986), pp. 20-22.

80 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, pp. 977-78.

injuries, and of houses that had collapsed totally or partially.82 A more
detailed note reported on the typhoon disaster in Kyūshū, and had been
copied by another member of the group who had heard details from a
traveller returning home from the devastated area. This note covers not only
human deaths and injuries but also the numbers of livestock lost, bridges
and boats destroyed, landslides and even trees blown down by the typhoon.
The record is also well organized in that it reports all these data domain by
domain, making reference to the lord and the official yield of the land in
each case as well.83 This practice probably indicates that members of the
rural elite were trained to be meticulous in handling documents when they
considered them important. It is likely that such training was given in the
course of their duties as village officials, such as headman and elders, or as
post-station administrators.84

It is also important to know how fast news reached the rural town of
Shiozawa from Edo and other places. News could take time; however, it is
evident that some information travelled fast. The abovementioned news
about the crime in Edo was contained in a letter written by Bokushi in
Shiozawa just sixteen days after the execution of the perpetrator in the
metropolis. Another letter from Bokushi in 1834 tells of a great fire in Edo
which had occurred just seven days earlier. This seems an extraordinary
speed of communication when we take into account the season: Bokushi’s

83 Ibid., pp. 119-21.
84 For the duties and status of village officials, see, for example, Harumi
Befu, ‘Village Autonomy and Articulation of the State’, in John W. Hall and
Marius Jansen (eds), Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern
Yuriko, ‘Mura yakunin no yakuwari’, in Fujii Jōji (ed.), Shihai no shikumi,
vol. 3 of Nihon no kinsei (Chūō kōronsha, 1992), esp. pp. 248-70.
letter was dated 2/17, which was 26 March in the Gregorian calendar. At that time this region, especially the mountain paths between Echigo and Kōzu, must have been still covered by massive snowfalls. Swift communication had nevertheless been made possible by the development of an efficient mail system. In Chapter Five, I will provide more data about letter-delivery between Edo and this region in my analysis of communication between Bokushi and Bakin and Kyōzan in connection with their book projects.

There remains the question of whether other members of the rural elite valued information as much as Bokushi did, and if so, from what point in time. As far as Bokushi is concerned, the available evidence of his vigorous engagement with the exchange of information dates from the 1820s or after. However, a seventeenth-century document belonging to an elite family in a post-town neighbouring Shiozawa clearly indicates the existence of far earlier forerunners of Bokushi in this regard: namely, the Satō family’s notebook, ‘Daidai shoji oboegakichō’ (Generation-to-generation notebook on various matters), written from 1672 to 1689. 85 Topics in this notebook include the family business, community disputes, harvests, fires, geography of the region, routes and distances to major cities, and bakufu-han politics. Especially noteworthy is that business information such as commodity prices and demand in different markets — Edo, Niigata, Takasaki, Kyoto and Osaka — was clearly considered to be crucial for the family’s profit-making in trading in seafood, salt, tobacco and textiles. Other significant notes detail news about bakufu politics, such as

85 In SCS-S, vol. 1, pp. 482-95.
descriptions of the shogun’s punishment of several daimyo for various infractions.

This text strongly suggests that there was a vital level of exchange of information between merchants in Edo and the writer and other rural merchants in this post-town as well as Shiozawa. The Satō document indicates that even in remote areas like Uonuma, and even in the seventeenth century, at least some people were capable of and interested in handling information as part of their day-to-day lives and business activities. In this regard, Bokushi was not exceptional; he was a worthy successor of these forerunners in information-dealing.

Throughout the eighteenth century and subsequently, the flow of information increased in urban and rural areas as a result of further growth in human mobility, commodity-trading and cultural exchange. Bokushi was quick to take advantage of developments in these areas. Another important trend which he exploited, and which broadened his perspective and contacts beyond the locality, was the growth in opportunities for provincial people to travel.

**Bokushi’s Travels**

Bokushi’s travels provided him with a great many opportunities to narrow the gap between his home region and the metropolises in terms of social linkages, cultural standards, economic activities, and, most importantly,

---

86 A similar source is ‘Yorozu no oboe’ (Note of various matters) produced by Enomoto Yazaemon, a merchant in Kawagoe in Musashi Province, in the period from 1653 to 1660, in Enomoto Yazaemon (annotated by Ōno Mizuo), *Enomoto Yazaemon oboegaki: kinsei shoki shōnin no kiroku* (Heibonsha, 2001), pp. 121-352.
psychology. Familiarization with the national ‘centre’, in turn, prompted his realization of the geo-cultural distinctiveness of his home region. As Takeuchi Makoto argues, the popularization of travel in the late Tokugawa period prompted cross-cultural encounters among people, leading them to reflect on their own region in comparison with others, and Bokushi was a prime example. Travel also entailed observing, reflecting on and, for Bokushi, depicting landscapes in artistic forms. These experiences undoubtedly provided a significant impetus to Bokushi to write a book about his region.

Before examining Bokushi’s own experiences, it is useful to grasp the general situation of travel in his day. The conventional understanding that ordinary people in the Tokugawa period had little freedom to travel has been virtually overturned by a number of studies. It is now clear that despite the bakufu’s policy of restricting commoners’ travel, and its controlling devices such as travel permits (tsūkō tegata) and barrier stations (sekisho), the Tokugawa period witnessed a continuous increase in mobility. Particularly from the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards, travel

---

proliferated decade by decade, encompassing large numbers of people not only in cities but also from rural villages.

Most journeys were made in the name of pilgrimage since the bakufu and han authorities restricted travel except for religious or medical purposes. Pilgrimage to the Great Shrine in Ise Province in particular became almost a national practice, and there were periodic outbursts of fanatical enthusiasm in which millions of people headed for the shrine at the same time. According to Fujitani Toshio, there were three prominent mass pilgrimages to the Great Shrine in Ise, attracting more than one million people each for a short period in 1705, 1771 and 1830. He assumes that the latter two incidents involved approximately two million and five million people respectively, while Japan’s national population was estimated to be thirty million or so in this period.89

Such mass movement was dependent upon, firstly, the development of infrastructure for travel, and secondly, people’s relative economic latitude to engage in such activities thanks to the money economy. Moreover, socio-cultural support was provided through such means as the publication of travel guidebooks and maps, the widespread practice of organizing travel associations (kō), and the development of tourist attractions like temples, shrines, shops selling local delicacies and other products, and pleasure quarters. It is evident that people’s enthusiasm for pilgrimages in this period was related to their increasing interest in worldly concerns like wealth, health and pleasure as distinct from the original purpose of

pilgrimage as a means of ensuring spiritual peace in the next life. Fujitani regards such a shift in interest from the next life to this life as one of the reasons for the popularization in the Tokugawa period of the Great Shrine in Ise, specifically.\(^90\)

Records of the activities of Bokushi and his family certainly confirm the widespread practice of travel among rural people. As summarised in Table 1.2, Bokushi made thirteen trips beyond his county including three major ones: a trip to Edo and the Kamakura area in 1788, when he was aged nineteen; a round trip on the western Japan pilgrimage circuit to visit the Great Shrine in Ise and the Thirty-Three Kan’non Temples in the Kansai area in 1796, when he was twenty-seven; and another trip to Edo in 1819 at the age of fifty. Given his family background, these long-distance trips by Bokushi were not unusual. He was a member of a certain social cluster that took such travels for granted. In his family, not only men but also his mother, sisters and daughter all travelled to Ise.\(^91\) (An exception was his son, who died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one.) Female tourists were usually accompanied by a male relative or neighbour who acted as the tour leader.

According to Bokushi’s records, his daughter’s pilgrimage to Ise in 1816 cost the family ten \(ryō\) and took 125 days.\(^92\) In Shiozawa at that time, ten \(ryō\) could buy 13.6 koku (2.45 kilolitres) of rice or more.\(^93\) Other

\(^{90}\) See Fujitani, ‘Okagemairi’ to ‘eejanaika’, p. 30.

\(^{91}\) For Bokushi’s sisters’ trips to Ise, see ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 18-19, 26-27, 33. For his mother’s, see ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 445, and ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 913. Strangely, there is no record of any pilgrimage to Ise by his father.

\(^{92}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 57-58.

\(^{93}\) See Appendix.
records of the cost of pilgrimage include 5.5 ryō 900 mon for a trip to Ise in 1790 by Fuji, Bokushi’s sister, and 4.5 ryō 400 mon for a trip by Taka, another sister, to Ise in 1791. In 1798 Taka went on a second trip to Ise without proper permission (nukemairi) from the village headman, spending 3.5 ryō.94

Such expense and prolonged absence from work notwithstanding, men and women of wealthy families like the Suzukis were not only financially able but also socially expected to travel, at least to Ise. Although there is no conclusive evidence to answer the question of how many people from the Shiozawa area participated in long-distance pilgrimages or travel to Edo or Osaka, Bokushi’s writings undoubtedly suggest that participation was fairly widespread within certain social clusters. His lists of family members’ travelling companions ranged from village headmen to wives and daughters of merchants or artisans. For example, a list of pilgrims who accompanied Bokushi’s sister Taka to Ise in 1791 includes a carpenter’s wife.95 It can be said that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, within the community of Shiozawa and surrounding villages, the social custom of

---

94 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 26-27, 33. Taka’s nukemairi is mentioned in Anne Walthall, ‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth Century Japan’, Journal of Social History, 23 (1990): 475, and in Nenzi, Excursions in Identity, p. 54. While Walthall’s description of the journey is correct, I find Nenzi’s interpretation of Bokushi’s attitude towards this ‘unauthorized journey’ somewhat misleading. Nenzi writes that Bokushi ‘did not disapprove’ of that offence because it had merit in terms of education. It is clear from Bokushi’s notes, however, that Taka just joined a tour group without saying anything to Bokushi or other family members, and that Imanari Ryoro, brother-in-law of Bokushi and Taka, and the leader of the tour group, took all the responsibility of including Taka. I think Ryoro was ultimately the decision-maker in this matter, not Bokushi or Taka herself.

95 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 27.
promoting and organizing long-distance travel beyond immediate geographical boundaries was well established.

In such a context, where travel was popular, the most significant feature of Bokushi’s journeys is not the quantitative aspects such as frequency, distance, duration and cost, but rather the multiplicity of his activities while travelling. Travel in the Tokugawa period has been studied in several contexts, with emphasis on pilgrimages, commercial activities and sightseeing, as well as artistic, scholastic and political endeavours. Yet, little attention has been paid to the fact that many journeys were of a multi-purpose nature, even though the travel document specified one single ‘official’ activity, such as pilgrimage. As was typical of journeys to the Ise Great Shrine, popular pilgrimages were not solely motivated by religious belief but to a large extent can be attributed to an interest in sightseeing and cultural activities as well as socialization with co-pilgrims from the home community. This mixture of activities during the journey is strong evidence that society was increasingly equipped with the infrastructure to meet people’s diverse desires in travelling.

Bokushi’s trips conspicuously display a mixture of activities. Table 1.2 below is compiled from Bokushi’s own writings, and therefore shows his self-described reasons for travel and the activities conducted on the journeys, rather than only the ‘official’ reasons.

---

Table 1.2: Bokushi’s travels beyond Uonuma County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Destinations</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Edo, Enoshima, Kamakura, all in Musashi Province</td>
<td>5/19 - 7/28</td>
<td>Selling <em>chijimi</em> textile, sightseeing, writing a <em>haikai</em> travelogue, learning Chinese calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yahiko, Izumozaki, Kashiwazaki, all in Echigo Province</td>
<td>7/16 - unknown</td>
<td>Sightseeing, socialising with friends, visiting pleasure quarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kusatsu hot spring in Kōzuke Province</td>
<td>5/20 - 7/2</td>
<td>Spa treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Kusatsu hot spring in Kōzuke Province</td>
<td>7/25 - unknown</td>
<td>Spa treatment, socialising with local literati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ise and western cities/provinces including Nagoya, Osaka and Kyoto</td>
<td>1/8 - 4/2</td>
<td>Pilgrimage to the Ise Great Shrine and the Thirty-Three Kannon Temples, socialising with friends, sightseeing, meeting with literati in various places, writing a <em>haikai</em> travelogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Mt Naeba at the border between Echigo and Kōzuke Provinces</td>
<td>7/5 - 7/8</td>
<td>Socialising with friends, writing a travelogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Kusatsu hot spring in Kōzuke Province</td>
<td>8/8 - <em>urū</em> 8/3</td>
<td>Spa treatment, socialising with local and visiting literati, writing a travelogue in <em>haikai</em> and Chinese verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Around Echigo Province</td>
<td>1/20 - 3/7</td>
<td>A field-trip for the writing of ‘Echigo seppu’ with Bakin, collecting local episodes, meeting local literati, and writing a <em>haikai</em> travelogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td><em>urū</em> 4/15 - 6/13</td>
<td>Receiving ear treatment from a specialist, taking a divorced woman back to Edo, visiting illustrious literati, sightseeing, visiting relatives, writing a <em>haikai</em> travelogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Nagaoka in Echigo Province</td>
<td>6/2 - 6/4</td>
<td>Intending (but failing) to meet with his fifth wife-to-be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Niigata, Shibata, Sanjō, Yahiko, etc., all in Echigo Province</td>
<td>7/4 - 7/27</td>
<td>Attending a festival, sightseeing with his granddaughter, writing a <em>haikai</em> travelogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bokushi’s activities during travel included business, sightseeing, study, socialization, medical treatment, visiting relatives, pilgrimage, and meeting literary figures and artists. They even included taking a divorced woman back to her parents’ home in Edo on behalf of his friend in a neighbouring town. These activities more or less reflect the general situation of travel by members of the rural elite in the early nineteenth century.

Equally importantly, Bokushi’s travels included ‘field trips’ specifically for the purpose of literary production. His trips around Echigo Province in 1819 and to Akiyama Valley in 1828 were conducted as preparation for his literary pursuits, with the goal of publishing books in association with nationally famous literary figures. On the first trip, Bokushi collected material for the proposed book, ‘Echigo seppu’, to be written by Bakin and Bokushi, and on the second he was responding to Ikku’s interest in writing about the valley community. Neither Bakin nor Ikku published Bokushi’s drafts, but *Hokuetsu seppu* used the material Bokushi obtained on these journeys. This kind of travel was probably not usual among provincial commoners, although there was a tradition in the
world of haikai poetry that poets travelled around the provinces and cities to write poems, sometimes with the intention of publishing their work later.\footnote{See, for example, Kobayashi Keiichirō, Kobayashi Issa (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961), pp. 57-78.} Whether or not Bokushi’s fieldwork trips were exceptional, people’s reasons for and activities while travelling were undoubtedly increasingly diverse.

Bokushi’s travels affected him in the following four ways at least. Firstly, he was able to familiarize himself with urban culture and perspectives. Secondly, he could reflect on the physical features of his own region, comparing it geographically with other landscapes. Thirdly, he developed his network of urban and provincial practitioners of the arts; and fourthly, he wrote travel accounts in specific literary formats.

Bokushi’s first-hand learning about urban culture began with his first trip to Edo in 1788, when he was nineteen.\footnote{Bokushi’s recollections of this trip are found in ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 718-40; ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 23; ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 446-47; and ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, pp. 906-07.} Although it is sometimes said that his family business as a chijimi wholesaler sent him to Edo to sell the textile,\footnote{See, for example, Okada Takematsu, ‘Kaisetsu’, in HS-Iwanami, p. 321; Nishiyama, Edo Culture, p. 102.} Bokushi’s writings suggest that chijimi-selling was merely a subordinate purpose of the trip, and in fact, the Suzuki-ya was no longer regularly dealing with chijimi at that point. Bokushi did take eighty rolls of chijimi textile from Shiozawa to sell in Edo, but the attempt was unsuccessful because the unusually cold summer in that year rendered the chijimi useless, as chijimi was a relatively expensive kimono fabric for summer use. His failure to sell much chijimi, however, did not really
disappoint him or his father. Rather, it seems that the trip was meant to provide him with a wide range of experiences and understanding about the outside world to equip him to become an independent adult able to engage effectively in social, cultural and business practices. In a sense, his first trip to Edo can be regarded as a socio-cultural ‘initiation’ for this young, wealthy farmer-merchant from the rural town of Shiozawa, which had been greatly strengthening its ties with the capital city, as discussed above. Bokushi acknowledged such motives for this trip, recalling that in a tourist inn near Nihonbashi, in Edo, he and his companion from home, Kōshichi of the Takada-ya, discussed what they could best do in the metropolis, in view of the value of travel for enlightening young people.100

Bokushi’s accounts of the 1788 trip to Edo give a good indication of what this metropolis offered to young tourists from the provinces. In fact, Edo and many other areas in Japan were experiencing considerable difficulties around that time, especially between 1783 and 1787, the period of the Tenmei-era famine and consequent riots. The 1787 riot in Edo is considered to be the worst of its kind. It destroyed the premises of 980 rice-dealers and many rich merchants, and even led to a reshuffle of the bakufu cabinet.101 This social and political unrest notwithstanding, tourists could enjoy what Edo had to offer, such as evening entertainment, theatre, shopping, sightseeing and education. In his autobiographical essay,

100 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 447.
‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi recollected that while other *chijimi* merchants from Uonuma indulged themselves in shopping for clothing and accessories, or nightlife at the pleasure quarters, he himself exercised restraint in his activities, even though others teased him. He says he spent his leisure patronizing book-lenders and whiled away time reading popular stories in his inn. 102 Other texts by Bokushi, however, reveal that he also enjoyed sightseeing at many famous temples, shrines and historical sites; viewing fireworks; visiting theatres; and at least walking through pleasure quarters with friends. 103 Such pastimes were irresistible for tourists from the provinces, however upright one was. Another attraction of Edo for people like Bokushi was the learning opportunities it provided. Thus, Bokushi decided to learn Chinese calligraphy while in Edo from a famous scholar-writer, Sawada Tōkō (1732-96). 104 I will provide more detail about this in Chapter Four.

Bokushi’s familiarity with urban culture developed further through his visit to Osaka and Kyoto during his western Japan pilgrimage in 1796, and later through his second trip to Edo in 1819. Especially noteworthy are his meetings with famous literary figures and artists. On the 1796 trip, he met with a number of *haikai* masters, listing in his record of the trip eight names in Osaka and five in Kyoto. 105 Meanwhile, in Edo in 1819, he met with Bakin and Ikku, with whom he had already established a relationship by that time, and also visited and acquired some artworks from several other

---

102 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 446-47.
104 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 447.
famous figures, as we will see more fully in Chapter Five.\textsuperscript{106} Bokushi’s meetings with these important figures suggest not only a vigorous exchange between literary enthusiasts in the provinces and their favourite artists in the metropolises, but also a social trend towards treating the arts as commodities. Fashionable literary and artistic figures were idolized, and responded by engaging in various profit-making activities, a trend that encouraged meetings between urban professionals in the arts and their fans from the countryside, amongst other results. Such meetings both reflected and promoted an increasing familiarity with urban culture on the part of provincial practitioners of the arts like Bokushi.

In terms of reflection on the geography of Bokushi’s own region, the 1796 western Japan pilgrimage should be regarded as the most significant of his travels. As will be shown in Chapter Six, Bokushi’s ambition to publish a book about his region grew around 1797. I suggest that the 1796 trip provided Bokushi with a great deal of stimulation, prompting his awareness, firstly, of where he was located geo-culturally, and secondly, of what he would be able to offer to a wider cultural community from his own experience and background.

Travel, by and large, provokes geographical consciousness. Such sensitivity was undoubtedly stronger in the case of premodern travellers moving on foot, on the backs of horses, or in non-powered boats in comparison with today’s methods of transport. Limited prior information and opportunities may also have made the travellers more sensitive to such matters than their modern counterparts. Bokushi’s account of his 1796

\textsuperscript{106} ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 69.
travel confirms these points. He joined a group of seven other pilgrims from neighbouring villages, leaving Shiozawa for Ise in mid-winter, on 1/8 or 16 February in the Gregorian calendar.\textsuperscript{107} After experiencing ‘a blizzard twisting like smoke’ and ‘a walk on slabs of ice’ on the Echigo side of the Mikuni Mountains, a few days later he saw plum blossoms and dandelions while walking on the Nakasendō Highway in Kōzuke Province.\textsuperscript{108} Bokushi evidently was keenly aware of natural differences between his home and the outside world, particularly the warmer provinces such as Kii. One day in the early second month or mid-March, he admired a beautiful spring day of Wakanoura in Kii, where cherry blossoms were blooming and nightingales and shrikes were singing.\textsuperscript{109} His home in Shiozawa must still have been nearly buried under snow at that point.

More importantly, this trip provided Bokushi with opportunities to reflect on and portray his own ‘home’. As countless other travellers with \textit{haikai} knowledge presumably did, he expressed his yearning for home in poems in his travelogue, when reminded of it by particular scenes on the trip. An example of a \textit{haikai} expressing such feeling is:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Furusato ya}  
\textit{tanemakibito ni}  
\textit{kuni koishi}  

Seeders in the fields  
make me long for my country,  
my dear homeland.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{107} See ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 741-83, and ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 30. Many groups of pilgrims departed from Echigo for Ise right after the New Year period even though it was usually the snowiest time of the year. The reason seems to be that most farmers needed to return before the start of the farming season in spring.

\textsuperscript{108} ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 741-42.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 759.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 752.
Writing *haikai* travelogues was a popular practice among literate travellers, who were strongly influenced by *Oku no hosomichi* (The narrow road to the interior), the famous work published by Matsuo Bashō in 1702. What is especially significant, however, is that on this trip, Bokushi seems to have had a great many opportunities to describe his home in dialogues with local poets in various places. One *haikai* poem in the travelogue is representative.

While visiting a poet in Osaka, Bokushi wrote:

\[
\begin{align*}
Yukiguni no & \quad \text{It has been a long spring day,} \\
hanashi mo mazete & \quad \text{talking all day long} \\
hinaga kana & \quad \text{about my snow country amongst other} \\
& \quad \text{things.}^{112}
\end{align*}
\]

It is probable that his literary dialogues with other poets on his trip encouraged Bokushi to designate his home as the ‘snow country’, and himself as its representative, by contrasting it with the warmer parts in which he was travelling. I assume that such exchanges contributed to Bokushi’s realization of his own geo-cultural location in contrast to the physical features and general cultural situation in Edo, Osaka and Kyoto. In Bokushi’s life, this was probably an important stage of nursing literary ambitions. He gradually came to understand what professional and amateur

---


112 ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 763.
practitioners of the arts were interested in, and, importantly, how he could respond to the interests of such an audience in the broader arena of literature.

Bokushi also made very good use of his trips for building his personal networks. According to his *haikai* travelogues, he met with thirty-one *haikai* poets in fourteen towns on the 1796 pilgrimage, including eight in Osaka and five in Kyoto.\(^\text{113}\) In his account of his trip around Echigo in 1819, he listed thirty-two people whom he met in twenty-eight towns and villages.\(^\text{114}\) The majority were local *haikai* poets who were also wealthy farmer-merchants or priests. His spa treatment in Kusatsu in Kōzuke Province, particularly in 1792 and 1816, brought Bokushi another opportunity for network-building. Through a local *haikai* master who ran a hot-spring inn there, Bokushi made the acquaintance of several samurai poets and priest-poets.\(^\text{115}\) This fact supports Laura Nenzi’s argument that recreational travel ‘provided a convenient platform’ to help people temporarily reshape personal hierarchies, and craft new identities.\(^\text{116}\)

Finally, Bokushi’s travel accounts are important because they show how he moulded his geographical observations into certain specific literary forms. His travel accounts can be categorized into three types in terms of literary styles: Chinese poems, *haikai* travelogues and prose travelogues. Bokushi’s texts across these three styles exemplify how geographical descriptions vary depending on the genre of literature chosen by the writer.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Aoki Michio points to the ‘observational perspective’ on Bokushi’s region that is embedded in *Hokuetsu seppu*,

\(^{113}\) Ibid., pp. 741-75.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., pp. 783-97.
\(^{115}\) Ibid., pp. 778-83.
comparing it with the ‘lyrical view’ in accounts of topography by other writers.\(^{117}\) However, it is apparent that Bokushi’s writing could also be ‘lyrical’ when a specific literary style required him to follow that convention. His Chinese poems are the most obvious case, and haikai travelogues are next. Following his father’s practice, Bokushi wrote short travelogues after his trips, using the haikai poems he had composed along the way. There exist seven pieces of work covering his trips between 1788 and 1827.\(^ {118}\)

By contrast, Bokushi’s prose travelogues are represented by ‘Akiyama kikō’, an ethnographical account of his seven-day trip in 1828 to a valley community that was situated on the Echigo-Kōzuke border, and was almost totally isolated from other villages: so much so that there was a myth that this was the community in which some aristocrats of the Heike clan had hidden themselves after being defeated by the Genji clan in the twelfth century.\(^ {119}\) This text of Bokushi’s certainly displays a more objective attitude towards the natural features and culture of this isolated valley in comparison with his haikai travelogues and Chinese poems, as can be seen in the graphic representation of the journey in Figure 1.4.


\(^{118}\) ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 718-818.

\(^{119}\) See ‘Akiyamakikō’, in SBZ1, p. 271.
Marcia Yonemoto’s discussion of the development of early modern travel writing is relevant here. With particular reference to travel writing by the Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714), Yonemoto points to a ‘shift in emphasis from the classical and medieval understanding of travel writing as self-expression … toward an early modern understanding of travel writing as the literature of annotation’. According to Yonemoto, in this new perspective, ‘the world is other-than-self and thus must be made comprehensible through intellectual intervention’.\textsuperscript{120} Bokushi’s perspective in ‘Akiyama kikō’ as well as in many episodes in \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} can be seen as conforming to the geographical understanding of such early modern

\begin{flushright}
intellectuals as Ekken. Among works that follow the model of Ekken’s travel writings, the most closely related to Bokushi’s accounts are *Tōyūki* (Journey to the east) and *Saiyūki* (Journey to the west) by Tachibana Nankei (1753-1805), a Kyoto-educated doctor originally from Ise. These two books were widely read after their publication in 1795, particularly because, Yonemoto says, ‘they played up the unusual aspects of local culture and folklore and provided readers a window onto heretofore undiscovered places and peoples’. Bokushi was most likely one of the readers and writers who had learnt from Nankei’s books. As I will explain in Chapter Six, he was advised by Bakin in 1818, if not by someone else earlier as well, that he should carefully read *Tōyūki*. Bokushi’s observation of and writing about the geographical and ethnographical features of his region were thus undoubtedly moulded by his reading of this relatively new kind of early modern travel writing.

* * * * * * *

Bokushi’s home region in Echigo Province underwent gradual but significant social and economic transformation in the Tokugawa period. While the natural environment in terms of geography and climate remained a considerable constraint on communication, this region was far from isolated from the outside. Thanks to the political initiative that enabled development of a broader transport and communication system, on the one

---

hand, and of people’s interest in expanding or changing their economic or cultural activities, on the other, this region as well as others strengthened its connections to metropolises, major towns, and other provinces. The rural town of Shiozawa was one of many nodal points in such a web of connection. Although the extent of urbanization of Shiozawa was not particularly significant, this rural town did act as the agent of the ‘city’ for local inhabitants, and as the doorway to economic, cultural, political and social information. Moreover, the mobility of provincials in this area was not negligible. People both immigrated to and emigrated from Bokushi’s region for economic and social reasons. The rural towns increased their populations, attracting villagers from surrounding areas. Merchants and seasonal labourers moved between their homes and the cities. And a great many provincials enjoyed travelling.

Bokushi’s sense of regional identity was a product of all these social transformations in his home region. Awareness of the peculiarity of the natural environment and lifestyle of his region was stimulated by knowledge of the outside. It is generally the case that the remoteness and peculiarity of a peripheral region can only be identified after connection with the ‘centre’ or with other places, while strengthened connection in turn begins to weaken the actual remoteness and peculiarity of the periphery. Alternatively, connection with the ‘centre’ can invent or exaggerate the remoteness of the periphery. Bokushi’s activities in the rural town of Shiozawa and his travel experiences contributed to both aspects of his relationship with the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’ in this sense. I will continue to discuss this paradoxical position of Bokushi in Chapters Five...
and Six with regard to his communication networks and his effort to publish *Hokuetsu seppu*.

While everyone’s life was affected by the general social transformation of Bokushi’s region at this time, people’s propensity to take advantage of available opportunities was contingent on their location, social status, financial circumstances and family background on the one hand, and their individual idiosyncrasies on the other. Regional transformation spanned a long period and emerged unevenly, involving some people more than others, some areas more than others. Part of the basis of Bokushi’s awareness of the features of his region certainly lies in the development of economic and cultural ties between the Uonuma region and Edo and other places, but at the same time, we also need to examine his experiences at the personal level more closely.

The next chapter will investigate the making of another part of Bokushi’s identity: as a rural farmer-merchant. Our focus thus shifts to his negotiation with the changing rural economy.
Chapter Two

**The Farmer-Merchant:**

**Bokushi’s Rural Business**

Bokushi constructed his economic life as a wealthy farmer-merchant in the rural town of Shiozawa. Just as the rural town occupied an ambiguous position between villages and cities, so did Bokushi and his fellow farmer-merchants occupy an ambiguous position within the occupational framework that was an integral feature of the Tokugawa regime: the *shi-nō-kō-shō* (samurai-farmer-artisan-merchant) system. It is evident that such farmer-merchants necessarily and routinely crossed the associated social and occupational boundaries.

This chapter explores Bokushi’s economic life. As has briefly been touched upon in Chapter One, the economic environment of Bokushi’s region and, more specifically, his town, changed considerably during the Tokugawa period. Fundamentally, change occurred because of the spread of a money economy in this agrarian region. Thanks to his activities as a merchant and his residence in a market town, Bokushi himself was located at a prime point where rural people encountered and were affected by the money economy.

Analysis of Bokushi’s own economic activities highlights the mixture of agriculture, cottage industry and commerce that characterized the rural economy in the late Tokugawa period. I argue that Bokushi’s case clearly exemplifies the duality in the lives of many residents of rural towns in terms of interest both in commerce and in agriculture. Bokushi and other well-placed farmer-merchants, taking advantage of their position socially
and geographically, in fact acted as an important bridge between commerce and agriculture in this period. As I will show, Bokushi’s business activities were complex, and were affected by many factors such as economic changes, community politics, ideological trends and domestic circumstances. I consider his activities in this area as a whole to be part of an interesting process of redefining his identity in relation to the various social frameworks surrounding him.

I examine Bokushi’s economic life at four levels: in relation to his regional economic environment, his household economy, his daily work, and his internal values and personal conflicts with others. I firstly survey the economic transformation of Bokushi’s region with special reference to the cottage industry of producing hemp cloth known as ‘Echigo chijimi’, illustrating ways in which Bokushi’s activities were related to regional economic development. Secondly, I explore his activities as landlord, sketching his actual landholding practices in the process. The discussion then turns to Bokushi’s pawnbroking business, his life-long occupation. This section focuses on his everyday activities as a pawnbroker, as well as the problems that he encountered in his business. Finally, I analyse Bokushi’s economic thought and moral code, stressing the problems and tensions that he experienced in his endeavour to implement such principles as ‘business first’ and the importance of diligence. Overall, this chapter shows the complexity of Bokushi’s economic life, which exemplified the practices, values and problems of members of the rural elite more generally at a time when throughout Japan they were grappling with the development of the money economy and its ramifications.
The Rural Economy in Uonuma

The Uonuma region in Echigo was a typical agricultural area that predominantly produced rice in paddy fields. Yet, as we have already seen in Chapter One, commercial activities continuously developed in this region, centring on rural towns such as Shiozawa. Bokushi’s ancestors had already witnessed considerable economic change and its impact on people’s lives. Thus, even before Bokushi’s day, this region was by no means a self-sufficient agricultural community, but was already engaged economically with outside markets.

Bokushi’s parents’ venture into the chijimi business provides a clear example of the opportunities that had long arisen in dealing with this local product. Bokushi’s father, Jōemon (1737-1807), was a second son, so he did not succeed to the stem household (honke) of the Suzuki family. But he made a fortune with chijimi. According to Bokushi, Jōemon started his career as a village peddler of lantern oil, but in 1759, right after his marriage, he borrowed five ryō from the stem household, and went to the annual chijimi market in the town of Tōkamachi, the largest centre for this industry. There he made a profit of seven ryō within three months, although details of his business are unknown. Then he and his wife, Toyo, set up a small mercantile household, and began dealing in the hemp material needed to weave chijimi. Bokushi writes about his parents’ venture:

Since my parents did not have sufficient money to set up a business, first they just dealt in hemp material from the Mogami region. … For example, when a poor peasant in a tiny hut modestly asked for a single bunch of hemp, they
willingly gave her one and a half or even two bunches. … If a poor peasant could not settle her account, they took her clothes or other things into pawn. My parents worked so hard: they left home before dawn with heavy loads on their shoulders, walked on ice in the harsh winter, and even ate their lunch outside in a blizzard.¹

Besides revealing Bokushi’s obvious worship of his parents’ endeavours, this account also shows one way in which rural couples could start commercial activities associated with *chijimi* production in this region. With some capital, commercial talent, basic business skills, and willingness to peddle around villages tirelessly, people like Jōemon and Toyo had the chance to grow along with the rural economy. Another noteworthy point in Jōemon’s *chijimi* business is that he gained much profit from exchanging money between the Mogami region (in present-day Yamagata Prefecture), where he bought hemp material, and Uonuma, where he sold it, because exchange rates among gold, silver and *zeni* coins were different in the two places.²

According to Bokushi, Jōemon then became a *chijimi* broker, periodically travelling up to Edo or Kyoto on business. While gradually expanding his capital by dealing in *chijimi*, he also started trading rice and soybeans in the pursuit of speculative profit. We can see the rapid growth of his business during his first ten years of trade in the following figures: in 1761, twelve months after they became independent as a branch household

(bunke), Jōemon and Toyo’s commercial stock was worth 36.5 ryō; ten years later, when Bokushi was born, their stock had reached 250.25 ryō. This amount of money could buy 326 koku (58.8 kilolitres) of rice in Shiozawa in this period.

In contrast with the success of Jōemon, his elder brother, who succeeded to the stem family of the Suzukis, lost much money in trade, according to Bokushi’s account. His financial difficulty led to an exchange of property between the brothers in 1768. Bokushi’s father, the younger brother, took over the main house, and started using the tradename of Suzuki-ya. This unusual swap of property probably did not mean a formal exchange of family status between the stem family and the branch family, but it certainly weakened the hierarchy between them, as there is almost no reference to a ‘honke’ (stem family) in Bokushi’s writing after this period. In any case, this example confirms that even the deeply-rooted and apparently rigid tradition of family hierarchy could be upset by the economic power of the constituent households: as Oka Mitsuo points out, rural commercial production did create fluctuations in the social hierarchy of agrarian communities. The rapid rise and fall in economic status of Bokushi’s parents and uncle clearly indicate the degree of development of the money economy through commodity trade. If the economy of this region had been based merely on agricultural production, these changes could not have happened as quickly.

3 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
A summary of the development of the *chijimi* industry in Uonuma clarifies the context of Jōemon and Toyo’s success in their business. Jōemon and Toyo were by no means the first to become involved with this local product. It is said that around 1660, *chijimi* was first produced by a masterless samurai who had drifted from a western province to Ojiya. In his weaving he used a strongly twisted woof in a traditional hemp cloth known as Echigo *jōfu*. This new method of weaving, called *chijimi-ori* (meaning ‘shrunk woven’), quite quickly spread into surrounding villages in the Uonuma region. In Shiozawa Village, for example, within a decade from the commencement of production around 1681, villagers were producing 400 to 600 *tan* of chijimi annually.\(^7\) (A *tan* is a roll of textile for a standard kimono.) Demand from urban markets during the consumption boom of the so-called Genroku age between the 1680s and 1700s was a prime factor in the diffusion of this cottage industry throughout the area.\(^8\)

Studies show that the annual production of Echigo *chijimi* in the Uonuma region reached 30,000 *tan* in the 1720s, and then 60,000 *tan* by 1800. As has often been noted, the figure apparently reached as high as 200,000 *tan* in the 1780s, and was recorded as 150,000 *tan* in the 1820s.\(^9\) These two periods generally correspond to the greatest consumption booms in the metropolises in the Tokugawa period: namely, the boom during the Tanuma administration (1760-86) and that in the Bunka and Bunsei eras (1804-30). However, there is room for doubt about an annual production

---

\(^{7}\) See Watanabe Sansei, *Echigo shokufu no rekishi to gijutsu* (Komiyama Shuppan, 1971), p. 250.

\(^{8}\) See, for example, Niigataken (ed.), *Niigata-ken tsūshihen* (hereafter NKS-T), vol. 3 (Niigata: Niigataken, 1987), pp. 500-06.

figure of 200,000 tan. Weavers were all female, and, in a county whose entire female population was recorded as 37,848 in 1755, it would surely have been very difficult to have produced such an amount in a year.\(^{10}\) If, for example, a half of the female population were involved in weaving, it would require an average of 10.5 tan per weaver. An 1807 document in Shiozawa, on the other hand, shows that it took a weaver about eighty days to produce one tan of chijimi, from which we can infer that the maximum possible was four tan per year.\(^{11}\) Nor do available tax records provide conclusive evidence of such a large amount of production.\(^{12}\) Nevertheless, it seems to be true that the commercial production of chijimi textile spread to almost every corner of Uonuma County during the eighteenth century. According to a 1755 report, 286 villages among 292 in the county were producing chijimi or a similar kind of hemp cloth.\(^{13}\)

The chijimi industry provided a great many peasant weavers with money to spend, as well as creating many jobs in commerce for such people as material suppliers and brokers, and jobs in processing work for bleachers, dyers and packers. Historical records hint at the actual economic impact of these jobs, although the extant documents are from a slightly later period than the one we are examining. A survey of chijimi production in Shiozawa

---


\(^{12}\) See NKS-T, vol. 4, p. 455.

district in 1857 presents average figures of amount of production, cost and profit for a peasant household as follows.

**Table 2.1: Average costs and profit of chijimi production for weavers in Shiozawa in 1857**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average chijimi production per household per year</th>
<th>3 - 4 tan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average wholesale price of chijimi per tan</td>
<td>0.875 ryō</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost of hemp material per tan</td>
<td>0.3125 ryō</td>
<td>(36%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average charge for dying chijimi per tan</td>
<td>approx. 0.1235 ryō</td>
<td>(14%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average profit from weaving chijimi per tan</td>
<td>approx. 0.3753 ryō</td>
<td>(43%)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ‘Shiozawa-gumi sanbutsu torishirabe kakiagechō’, in Watanabe, *Echigo shokufu no rekishi to gijutsu*, pp. 612-13. (*Percentages have been calculated by me, and do not amount to 100% because the source does not provide information about other costs.*

According to these figures, an average chijimi-producing household (one family often had more than one weaver, typically mother and daughters) made a profit of 1.13 to 1.50 ryō by weaving three to four tan of chijimi every year. Thus *Hokuetsu seppu* comments, ‘In places where [chijimi] is manufactured, skill in weaving is the first requirement in the selection of a bride; appearance takes only second place’.\(^{14}\) Chijimi-weaving also provides important evidence of the fact that work by women in the agrarian family contributed significantly to the household economy, as Fukaya Katsumi and Kawanabe Sadao have demonstrated more generally.\(^{15}\) Further, it is important to note that this cash flow to a great many farming households can be regarded as a fundamental contributor in


itself to the regional money economy, which supported a variety of other businesses, including Bokushi’s pawnshop.

The Suzuki family’s economic success after Bokushi’s parents took over the main household was certainly related to the region’s growing money economy. However, it was not the chijimi business that this particular merchant family decided to pursue from then on. Contrary to a widely accepted understanding demonstrated below, the Suzuki family’s involvement in chijimi-trading was not significant at all. In fact, according to ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Eisei kirokushū’, chijimi was only important to the family for a short period of time, between 1759 and 1765, when Jōemon, then in his twenties, worked first as a material supplier and then as a jobber.16 In 1766, at the age of thirty, Jōemon withdrew from the chijimi business, and decided to run a pawnshop as his main occupation. Bokushi wrote that it was because Jōemon had tired of the travelling that the chijimi dealing had required of him for the previous six years.17

Perhaps Jōemon’s decision was also related to the weaker status in the chijimi industry of Shiozawa compared to other local centres, apart from his personal preferences. Chijimi production naturally facilitated the emergence of many wealthy brokers in the rural towns, especially Tōkamachi, Ojiya and Horinouchi, to which the Aizu-han authority granted licences to hold annual spring markets for chijimi-trading.18 Compared to these three places, Shiozawa had a smaller market; thus its chijimi merchants probably did not enjoy the same economies of scale that

---

17 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 476.
wealthier merchants in the other three places did. In fact, the status of Shiozawa’s *chijimi* market was ambiguous. Although *Hokuetsu seppu* claims Shiozawa as one of the four places that had official markets,¹⁹ most studies of Echigo *chijimi* do not recognize its status fully or at all.²⁰ It seems true that Shiozawa’s status in *chijimi*-dealing had not been fully authorized at the time. In 1840 a lawsuit was brought by *chijimi* merchants in Tōkamachi, claiming Shiozawa’s market was not officially authorized, and consequently, Shiozawa was banned from holding a *chijimi* market from 1841 onwards.²¹

Around 1789, Bokushi succeeded to his father’s business, as both pawnbroker and landlord. He faithfully continued both lines of business for four decades until he retired in 1830. There has been, however, a stubborn and misleading perception in the literature that Bokushi was a *chijimi* merchant. It seems to me that this perception is clearly linked to the content of *Hokuetsu seppu* as well as the view that *Hokuetsu seppu* is a great and authentic ethnographic record written by a local commoner intellectual. It appears that ‘Echigo *chijimi*’ is the second most important theme in *Hokuetsu seppu*, and is closely related to the main theme of ‘snow’. The following sentences comprise one of the most famous parts of *Hokuetsu seppu*:

> The thread is spun and twisted in the snow, the cloth is woven in the snow, it is washed in snow waters and bleached

---

¹⁹ HS-Iwanami, p. 85; SCT, p. 77.
²⁰ For example, NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 464-71; Watanabe, *Echigo shokufu no rekishi to gijutsu*, pp. 321-64.
on snow fields. There is \textit{chijimi} because there is snow.

Echigo \textit{chijimi} owes its fame to the combined powers of man and snow, working hand in hand. In Uonuma County, we say that \textit{chijimi} is a child of snow.\textsuperscript{22}

This part of the text naturally lures readers towards the impression that Bokushi was deeply involved in the famous local product from the snow country, although there is no mention of his occupation at all in \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}.

In the scholarly literature, to the best of my knowledge, Bokushi’s occupation was first mentioned in 1935 in Okada Takematsu’s commentary on \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}, where he was described as a pawnbroker and \textit{chijimi} merchant.\textsuperscript{23} Although Miya Eiji at one time remarked that the Suzukis discontinued their \textit{chijimi} business before 1800,\textsuperscript{24} the understanding that Bokushi remained a \textit{chijimi} merchant is still dominant.\textsuperscript{25} This is largely attributable to Takahashi Minoru’s work, which has been most widely referred to both in scholarly studies and in general publications. Takahashi stresses the ethnological value of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} in its description of \textit{chijimi} production, which is valid enough, but takes the extra step of presenting Bokushi himself as a \textit{chijimi} merchant who was also a

\textsuperscript{22} HS-Iwanami, p. 74. The translation is from SCT, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{23} Okada Takematsu, ‘Kaisetsu’, in HS-Iwanami, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{25} Recent popular publications which describe Bokushi as a \textit{chijimi} merchant include: Tokugawa Tsunenari, \textit{Edo no idenshi: imakoso minaosarerubeki Nihonjin no chie} (PHP kenkyūjo, 2007), p. 145.
Chapter Two: The Farmer-Merchant

pawnbroker.\textsuperscript{26} Further emphasis on Bokushi’s connection with \textit{chijimi} trading is evident in studies which focus on the development of regional culture in relation to local industries.\textsuperscript{27} Suzuki Bokushi kinenkan (the Suzuki Bokushi Museum) in Shiozawa clearly subscribes to this view too.

Contrary to this widespread understanding, in none of the sources I have used is there any statement by Bokushi that his or his father’s occupation was \textit{chijimi} merchant, except during the short period specified above. There are no references in historical documents to the Suzuki-ya as a Shiozawa \textit{chijimi} merchant. Bokushi’s writings merely mention some incidental engagement in the \textit{chijimi} industry, such as his trip to Edo in 1788 with a neighbour who was a \textit{chijimi} merchant, his apprenticeship training with a \textit{chijimi} wholesaler in 1785, and the weaving of \textit{chijimi} by his mother, sisters, wife and female servant, as was the case with very many women in the region.\textsuperscript{28} Clearly, the accepted view of Bokushi’s economic activities needs adjustment.

Nonetheless, Bokushi’s success in business was certainly related to the vigorous money economy to which \textit{chijimi} production contributed the most in this region. To illustrate this point, it is useful to examine the extent and the ways in which this region was engaged with the outside world in its economic activities in the late Tokugawa period.


\textsuperscript{27} Such studies include Haga Noboru, Edo Tōkyō bunkaron (Kyōiku shuppan sentā, 1993) (see pp. 66-77) and Aoki Michio, ‘Chūbu ishiki no mebae to yukuginikan no seirisu’, in Aoki Michio (ed.), Higashi to nishi, Edo to Kamigata, vol. 17 of Nihon no kinsei (Chūō kōronsha, 1994) (see p. 363) and ‘Chiiki bunka no seisei’, in Kinsei 5, vol. 15 of Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi (Iwanami shoten, 1995) (see p. 267).

\textsuperscript{28} See ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 22-23; ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 895.
Table 2.2 shows the annual trade of the fifty-eight villages of Shiozawa district with other provinces in 1832, using data which were prepared by the district headman for the Aizu-han authority. Table 2.3 produces basic demographic data for the Shiozawa district, from information contained in a 1755 document. Although there is a gap in time between the two sources, it is unlikely that the population of this region as a whole significantly changed in the interim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goods and services sold to other provinces</th>
<th>Value in ryō</th>
<th>Goods bought from other provinces</th>
<th>Value in ryō</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chijimi (16,000 tan)</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Cotton garments</td>
<td>5,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(69.1%)</td>
<td>Chijimi material (processed)</td>
<td>(32.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation services for travellers</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>Chijimi material (raw)</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(at six post-stations)</td>
<td>(8.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(21.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport services (at six post-stations)</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.2%)</td>
<td>Salt and salted dried fish</td>
<td>600-636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (900 horse-loads)</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>Silk garments, paper, oil, etc.</td>
<td>300-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.8-2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chijimi twine</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>Tea, medicine, horses, cows,</td>
<td>100-286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2%)</td>
<td>candles, pottery, vinegar,</td>
<td>(0.6-1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>soy sauce, dried food, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal labour in other provinces (approx. 120 people)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.0%)</td>
<td>Bamboo, brushes, ink sticks,</td>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>paper, books, sugar, lacquer-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ware, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>15,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sake</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from ‘Tahō shutsunyükin shirabe kakiagecho’, in Shiozawa orimono-shi henshū iinkai (ed.), Shiozawa orimono-shi shiryōhen (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawamachi kyōiku iinkai, 1967), pp. 69-72. Some insignificant items are omitted; thus, the value of the items in the table does not add up to the total. The groupings are according to the source. The rationale is unclear for some categories and some items seem to overlap.
Table 2.3: Basic demographic data for Shiozawa district (1755)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kokudaka (officially assessed productivity of land)</th>
<th>15,716 koku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>3,213 households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>13,746 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(male: 7,542 female: 6,204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures for an average household: 4.891 koku in landholding, 4.28 people (male 2.35 + female 1.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These data clearly indicate the degree of development of the money economy in this district. For example, the total value of goods and services sold to other provinces in 1832 was 15,909 ryō. This was even greater than the market value of the officially assessed rice yields (koku-daka) of the district, which was 15,716 koku in 1755 or 16,987 koku in 1789.\(^{29}\) For, even if 17,000 koku of rice were exchanged into money in Shiozawa, the amount received would normally have been between 8,000 and 14,000 ryō.\(^{30}\) On the other hand, the district spent 16,625 ryō on goods from other provinces. If we accept 3,213 as the total number of households in the district on the basis of the 1755 document, each household on average earned 4.95 ryō from selling goods and services to other provinces, and spent 5.17 ryō in buying things from other provinces.

Chijimi was very obviously the dominant item in the district economy. The industry produced 16,000 tan of cloth and generated 11,000 ryō or nearly seventy percent of total sales from this district to other provinces. The weavers sold chijimi twine as well as the finished textile.

\(^{29}\) The 1789 figure is found in ‘Shiozawagumi onengu shoeki maikin kanjomokuroku’, in Shiozawa orimono-shi henshu inkai (ed.), Shiozawa orimono-shi shiryohen (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawamachi kyoku inkai, 1967), pp. 36-37.

\(^{30}\) See Appendix.
The textile was then bleached and packed by workers who specialized in these processes. Subsequently, merchants in Uonuma and counties nearby distributed chijimi to kimono shops such as Mitsui Echigoya and Daimaru in Edo, Osaka, Kyoto and other places, or directly to consumers in the cities and provinces.31

On the other hand, Shiozawa district also bought a great amount of chijimi material, both raw and processed, as well as indigo for dyeing, at a total cost of 6,000 ryō in 1832. The chijimi material was probably brought largely from Dewa Province and partly from the Aizu region.32 Indigo dye might have been imported from even farther places, possibly Awa Province in Shikoku via Osaka. Awa was the dominant producer of indigo in the late Tokugawa period. The product was transported to Osaka and then distributed throughout the country.33 Thus it is clear that the local Shiozawa chijimi industry was firmly interlocked with other places in the processes of production, distribution and consumption.

Apart from chijimi production, the district also earned much from providing accommodation and transport services at six post-stations. Seasonal labour in Edo or other towns was another source of income. Shiozawa district as a whole did not make a profit in trading with other provinces despite the massive earnings from chijimi products, if the above document is correct, though certainly there is a possibility that a document

31 For the processes of production and distribution of chijimi, see, for example, NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 462-68; Kashiwazakishishi hensan iinkai (ed.), Kashiwazakishishi, vol. 2 (Kashiwazaki, Niigata: Kashiwazakishishi, 1990), pp. 427-34, 440-43; Hayashi Reiko and Ōishi Shinzaburō, Ryūtsū rettō no tanjō (Kōdansha, 1995), pp. 142-44.
33 See Kitajima Masamado, Bakuhansei no kunō, vol. 18 of Nihon no rekishi (Chūō kōronsha, 1974), pp. 161-64.
such as this, prepared for samurai authorities by commoners, might have emphasized cost and lessened profit in the effort to minimize taxes and levies. Nevertheless, it is very significant that as much as 16,000 ryō in money circulated in the district annually, and that the majority of the population participated in the circulation of money because chijimi was such a widespread cottage industry. Merchants like Bokushi were able to make profits by placing themselves in the middle of such a monetary flow.

Working as a pawnbroker and moneylender to local farmers and others, the Suzuki family acquired many pieces of land, and thus became established as a landlord. The following section explores this aspect of Bokushi’s business activities.

**Bokushi as Landlord**

For the well-to-do in the provinces, land acquisition was the usual way of accumulating wealth. Bokushi was certainly a great believer in landholding. He says in ‘Isho’ (Final testament) that ‘I will be glad if you all understand my wish: that the Suzukis should be the village’s largest landholder’.³⁴ He repeatedly expressed pride in the doubling of the property of the Suzuki family from land worth fifty koku to land worth one hundred koku under his headship. For example, he wrote in 1839: ‘I inherited property of fifty koku from my father and turned it into one hundred koku and more. On top of that, I built this house as well as the warehouse’.³⁵ He was well aware that there were landlords with bigger holdings than his. To him, as to others in the Tokugawa period, each family’s landholding in official kokudaka

---

³⁴ ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 899.
³⁵ Ibid., p. 894.
figures was the principal index of that family’s prosperity in both the samurai and farming classes, from daimyo to peasants. Accordingly, any increase or decrease in *kokudaka* seemed to indicate the economic ability of the head of the family.

The reality of the household economy was, of course, more complex. The following discussion explores Bokushi’s actual business activity as a landlord. It particularly considers how he acquired land, how much income such a large landholding as the Suzukis’ might have produced, and what business operations were actually carried out within the rural community by landlords like Bokushi.

Land acquisition and other changes in the property of the Suzuki family are summarized in Table 2.4. This information clearly indicates the Suzuki family’s high profile as a large holder of land, when compared with the average landholding in the Shiozawa area, which was 4.83 *koku* in Bokushi’s village, or 5.68 *koku* in the district as a whole in 1755.36

---

36 Calculated from ‘Echigo no kuni Uonuma-gōri muramura no yōsu taigaisho’ (1755), in Ojiyashi-shi henshū iinkai (ed.), *Ojiyashi-shi shiryoushū*, pp. 355-538.
Table 2.4: Land acquisition and other changes in the property of the Suzuki family, 1761-1839

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Head (age)</th>
<th>Notes from Bokushi’s writings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Jōemon (32)</td>
<td>Jōemon and his elder brother exchange houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Jōemon (53)</td>
<td>Builds a storehouse (cost 37,375 ryō).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Jōemon (56)</td>
<td>Landholding reaches 45.606 koku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Bokushi (31)</td>
<td>Lends a village headman 10 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Bokushi (35)</td>
<td>Purchases a 160-kari* paddy for 18.75 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Bokushi (36)</td>
<td>Builds a storehouse (cost 67,375 ryō 495 mon).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Bokushi (42)</td>
<td>Purchases a residential block for 13 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>Bokushi (45)</td>
<td>Purchases pieces of land for 48.5 ryō 460 mon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Bokushi (46)</td>
<td>Purchases a cedar forest for 4.625 ryō 16 mon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Bokushi (51)</td>
<td>Tenders a 50-ryō loan to Aizu han. Landholding reaches 80 koku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Bokushi (52)</td>
<td>Purchases a 425-kari paddy. Donates a 100-kari paddy to the family temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Bokushi (56)</td>
<td>Builds a main house (cost unknown, but 1,560 man-day carpentry work required over three years). Purchases a cedar forest for 7.5 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Bokushi (57)</td>
<td>Acquires a vegetable field and cedar trees resulting from an unredeemed loan of 5 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Bokushi (58)</td>
<td>Purchases a residential block for 42 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Bokushi (59)</td>
<td>Purchases a 15-kari paddy for 1.625 ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835 (?)</td>
<td>Kan’emon (38?)</td>
<td>Commences sake-brewing with investment of 200 ryō (‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 945).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Kan’emon (40)</td>
<td>Bokushi says in a letter that their property is now 150 koku (‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 971).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Kan’emon (42)</td>
<td>Bokushi writes in his final testament ‘we have not yet reached 200 koku’ (‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 893).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One kari was made up of ten hand-sized bundles of harvested rice plant. As explained below, ‘kari’ was also used to measure the value of paddies in addition to ‘koku’ and ‘tan’.

Compiled from ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, unless otherwise specified.

A close link among Bokushi’s land accumulation, moneylending and pawn-broking business is evident from this list. Most likely, much of the Suzuki land was acquired as a by-product of moneylending. As was typical of landholding practice in the Tokugawa period, the majority of the paddy fields acquired by the Suzuki family probably continued to be cultivated by the former owner, who would have borrowed money from the Suzuki-ya. The former owner, now the tenant of a paddy, rendered a certain amount of
rice as rent to the Suzukis once a year. For example, in 1814, Bokushi acquired a paddy field resulting from an unredeemed loan for nineteen ryō. He expected this paddy to bring 4.06 koku of rice to him, from which he was obliged to pay 2.3 koku in tax. The remainder, 1.76 koku, would be stored in his warehouse every year.\(^{37}\)

It seems that the Suzuki family’s property consisted of many of these paddy fields, resulting from a great many cases of moneylending in which the borrower had been unable to repay the loan. In ‘Isho’, Bokushi urged his son-in-law to reorganize the family’s notebook recording its ‘hundreds’ of pieces of land. He says that notebook entries should cover ‘area, purchase price, name of the seller’, ‘length from east to west’, ‘neighbouring owners’, ‘tax and rent’.\(^{38}\) This tells us that the Suzuki family’s land management was just as complex an operation as those discussed in other studies,\(^{39}\) covering a number of tenant farmers, each of whom often had multiple tenant contracts.

It is difficult to identify the actual economic outcome of Bokushi’s landlord business because of a lack of direct sources concerning his management of land and the complexity of the rural economy. It is now an established understanding among historians of early modern Japan that there was a considerable gap between kokudaka and actual yields of a normal paddy field. In studies in English, Thomas Smith’s 1959 suggestion has been widely accepted that the gap grew because for a long period, political

---

authorities did not conduct cadastral surveys, although actual yields significantly increased thanks to various developments in agricultural technology, including fertilizers.\textsuperscript{40} Edward Pratt’s 1999 study of gōnō, a major work in this area, continues to accept this view.\textsuperscript{41} However, researchers have not yet produced a comprehensive study of the gap between assessed value and actual yields, because of the lack of relevant sources for figures showing actual yields. This matter has been long neglected among historians working in Japanese as well as English, though Matsunaga Yasuo, for example, has recently revealed a number of new sources.\textsuperscript{42}

Despite the lack of precise sources, we can roughly sketch out Bokushi’s probable profit as a landlord in Uonuma region in the late Tokugawa period by using other available materials. Below in Table 2.5, in column (I), I use Kodama Shōzaburō’s study of a 1792 document prepared by a group of landlords in Ojiya for a lawsuit in which they sued their tenant farmers for arrearage in the bakufu court.\textsuperscript{43} Taking as an example a paddy that was expected to produce one hundred sheaves (kari) of rice plant, the document provides standard figures of rice production and related payments among the tenant, the landlord and the lord in eight categories, shown as items A to H in the table. Based on these data, I produce in column (II)

\begin{itemize}
\item Edward E. Pratt, \textit{Japan’s Protoindustrial Elite: The Economic Foundations of the Gōnō} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), p. 120.
\item Matsunaga Yasuo, \textit{Kinsei sonraku no tochi to kin’yū} (Koshi shoin, 2004), esp. pp. 3-72.
\item Kodama, \textit{Echigo-shokufu-shi no kenkyū}, p. 424.
\end{itemize}
hypothetical figures for Bokushi’s property in 1820, when his landholding reached eighty *koku* in assessed value.

Table 2.5: Hypothetical calculation of Bokushi’s profit from his 80 *koku* of paddies, using a 1792 document produced for a lawsuit in Uonuma region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(I)</th>
<th>(II)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Area of paddies</td>
<td>Standard figures given in the 1792 document for a 100-<em>kari</em> paddy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Calculation in case of 80 <em>koku</em> in <em>kokudaka</em> (1 x 80/1.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Officially assessed yield in rice (<em>kokudaka</em> or <em>taka</em>)</td>
<td>1.9 <em>koku</em> (342 litres)</td>
<td>80 <em>koku</em> (14,400 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Expected actual yield in rice (<em>agemai</em>)</td>
<td>3.6 <em>koku</em> (648 litres)</td>
<td>151.58 <em>koku</em> (27,284 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Rent rice (<em>iritatemai</em>) from tenant to landlord (including land tax)</td>
<td>2.0 <em>koku</em> (360 litres)</td>
<td>84.21 <em>koku</em> (15,158 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Land tax (<em>okuramai</em>) paid by landlord</td>
<td>0.76 <em>koku</em> (139 litres)</td>
<td>32.00 <em>koku</em> (5,760 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Various levies and cost (<em>shokakarimono</em>) which landlord needs to cover (if calculated in rice) (details unknown)</td>
<td>0.372 <em>koku</em> (67 litres)</td>
<td>15.66 <em>koku</em> (2,819 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Landlord’s expected profit (<em>jinushi tokumai</em>) (D-E-F)</td>
<td>0.86 <em>koku</em> (155 litres)</td>
<td>36.55 <em>koku</em> (6,579 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Tenant’s income (<em>sakutokumai</em>) (C-D)</td>
<td>1.6 <em>koku</em> (288 litres)</td>
<td>67.37 <em>koku</em> (12,126 litres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in Column (I) are compiled from Kodama, *Echigo-shokufu-shi no kenkyū*, p. 424.

On the basis of these figures, it can be conjectured that Bokushi’s eighty *koku* of paddies might have been around fifty-nine *tan* (approximately 5.85 hectares or 14.5 acres) in total area, and that they might have produced approximately 152 *koku* of rice: nearly 1.9 times more than the officially assessed productivity. If all paddies were farmed by tenants,
which is likely because Bokushi himself shows little interest in farming in
his writings, Bokushi would have collected more than eighty-four koku of
rice, from which he would have paid thirty-two koku in land tax. The
remainder of the rent rice would have amounted to fifty-two koku or so, but
he would have had to put aside another fifteen to sixteen koku for the
payment of miscellaneous levies and other costs, although details of these
are not given in the source. In the end, Bokushi’s profit from the eighty
koku of paddies can be calculated, roughly, as thirty-six koku of rice.
According to Bokushi’s record, this amount of rice would have been worth
around seventeen ryō at Shiozawa in 1820. Altogether, his tenant farmers,
on the other hand, would have kept sixty-seven koku in their own hands,
according to these hypothetical estimates, in clear contrast with the
conventional image of tenant peasants, who are sometimes referred to as
‘mizunomi byakushō’ (lit. water-drinking peasants, that is, those who have
no food left).

The distribution of takings from the harvest in Bokushi’s region also
challenges the conventional view of Tokugawa-period farming. According
to the 1792 document produced by landlords in Ojiya, forty-five percent of
the harvest went to the tenant farmer, twenty-four percent to the landlord,
twenty-one percent for land tax, and ten percent for miscellaneous levies
and costs, part of which became income for the bakufu and Aizu han. The
bakufu’s notorious taxation rate, expressed as ‘yon-kō roku-min’ (four for
the government, six for the people), seems correct if we look at the

---

44 See Appendix.
45 According to Kodama Kōta, the proportion of land tax to kokudaka varied
from time to time, and from domain to domain. For the shogun’s land, the
assessed value and the land tax, but is certainly inaccurate when we consider
the actual yield stated in the 1792 document, which is much greater. It is
noteworthy that even an official document for a lawsuit in the bakufu court
openly recognized such a great gap between the officially assessed
productivity of the land and its actually expected productivity. Evidently,
both farmers and samurai officials knew that *kokudaka* was a very
inaccurate measurement of the harvest.

In fact, some records of rice harvests kept privately by farmers in
Bokushi’s region suggest even higher figures for actual productivity than
the 1792 document for the lawsuit. Whereas the lawsuit document specified
3.6 *koku* as an expected actual yield from a hundred-*kari* paddy, figures in
the Satō family’s journal recorded from 1733 to 1756 in Seki Village, near
Shiozawa, average out to 4.74 *koku*, and a 1784 document belonging to the
Ōtsuka family, Bokushi’s neighbour, specifies 4.0 *koku* as the mean figure
of the actual yield from a hundred-*kari* paddy.46 These data strongly
indicate that the hypothetical figures produced above for Bokushi’s property
are not overestimated, and even encourage us to speculate that the income of
Bokushi and his tenant farmers was higher still.

Bokushi the landlord and moneylender might have benefited from
the complicated taxation system which required that payment be made not
rate was reduced from 60% or 50% to 40%, but returned to 50% from 1728
onwards, which contradicts the data with which we are concerned here.
Daimyo domains usually applied a harsher rate: for example, 60% in Akita
(Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2006), pp. 36-37.
46 For the Satō family’s journal, see SCS-T, vol. 2, p. 72, and Roppongi
Takeshi, *Edo-jidai hyakushō seigyō no kenkyū: Echigo Uonuma no mura no
keizai seisatsu* (Tōsui shobō, 2002), pp. 204-05. For the Ōtsuka family’s
document, see Tanaka Keiichi, ‘Echigo Uonuma “machiba hyakushō” no
entirely in agricultural produce, but to a considerable degree in money. According to a tax receipt for Shiozawa district issued by Aizu han in 1789, the tax on rice production, the most significant tax, was specified at 5,175 koku from the district’s kokudaka of 16,986 koku.\(^{47}\) To pay this tax, however, the district was instructed to submit only 1,876 koku of rice or 36.3 percent of the tax, and to pay the rest in money. In addition to the rice tax, eighteen other taxes and levies were listed in this document, most of which were paid in money. In the end, Shiozawa district paid taxes in rice of 2,041 koku and in money of 1,684 ryō in that year.

This taxation practice naturally made landlords interested in ways of dealing in rice, because they collected a large amount of rice from tenant farmers but rendered a much smaller amount to the han administration. Bokushi’s record of the rice prices at the Shiozawa market, contained in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ and ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, can be understood in this context. Apparently, the Shiozawa market was a prime place for local landlords like Bokushi to sell their rice. As discussed above, the rural town of Shiozawa was inhabited by many non-farming people who obviously had to buy rice and other food. Travellers also generated demand for food. Cash income from chijimi production might be used to buy rice if the weaver’s family were short of food in certain circumstances, such as the lack of a male cultivator in the family. Sake-brewing also required much rice, although brewers were all wealthy landlords in this region and so could grow their own. And, given such taxation methods as those mentioned above, people might need to exchange their rice for money or vice versa. It is likely that

wealthy landlord-merchants were able to make profit by reselling rice in the
market, or by using it for sake-brewing.

Bokushi’s writings also provide evidence that landlords were actively involved in trading crops. Some crop-dealing seems to have aimed at speculative profit. When Bokushi praised his father’s commercial talent, he wrote, ‘When my father bought rice, rice turned out profitable. When he bought soybeans, soybeans turned out profitable’. This implies that landlord-merchants like those of the Suzuki family were not simply selling their rent rice but were also buying grains for the purpose of profit-making. Some conducted business beyond their region and on a large scale. Bokushi’s brother-in-law, Imanari Ryoro (1756-1825) of Muikamachi, was one such inter-regional dealer in rice. An entry in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ recorded one of his activities. In 1787, during the Tenmei famine, Ryoro went to the towns of Nagaoka and Sanjō to buy a large amount of rice for ‘several hundred ryō’, putting down a ten-percent deposit. After his investment, the price of rice gradually rose, reaching 1.42 ryō per koku, before dropping to 0.85 ryō per koku in the following year. On this occasion, the Suzuki family also modestly participated in Ryoro’s speculative rice-dealing, by providing him with ten ryō.49

One of the most profitable activities for farmers in the Shiozawa district was to sell rice in the northern part of Kōzuke Province over the Mikuni Mountains, where people were consistently faced with a shortage of rice because the natural environment was unfit for rice production.50

48 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 475.
50 See, for example, NKS-T, vol. 4, p. 703.
Despite the difficulty of transporting such a heavy and bulky commodity over the mountains, a considerable amount of rice was carried on horseback from the Shiozawa area to Nagai Village, the first post-station on the Mikuni Highway in Kōzuke Province. According to the 1832 Shiozawa district trade report referred to above (see Table 2.2), villagers in this district exported 900 horse-loads of rice (792 koku) to Kōzuke in that year, for which they earned 618.75 ryō. The difference in the rice price between Nagai and Shiozawa, which were only fifty-two kilometres apart, was remarkable. As an extreme case, in 1825, a friend of Bokushi’s noted that the rice price in Nagai Village was 1.39 ryō per koku, whereas Shiozawa’s price was 0.76 ryō per koku.51

As seen above, agriculture in this region in Bokushi’s day was connected with many commercial activities. It is certain that landlords based in rural towns, like Bokushi, had a stronger link with commerce than did ordinary farmers and village-based landlords. However, it is also certain that landlords of the gōnō class could not afford simply to pursue the greatest economic benefit in dealing with agricultural products and property to the exclusion of all other considerations, because they were usually political leaders, too. Below, I discuss how Bokushi’s landlord business related to his political responsibilities in the rural community.

Historians argue that land accumulation by wealthy farmers was not only driven by individual economic interest but often involved communal initiative or agreement directed at maintaining the economic order of the

village community. The primary reason was that for rural residents the village was the fundamental unit of taxation and of political and social organization. Unlike in the modern system, the political authority taxed the village (mura uke), not the individual, on its property. Village officials and other elite farmers like Bokushi were thus obliged to be responsible for all tax payments as well as for law and order in their community. Therefore, they needed to avoid a situation in which many households became unable to sustain their domestic economy.

In terms of class conflict as well, the gōnō class had to pay attention to its relations with ordinary villagers. As is widely discussed in the scholarly literature, ordinary villagers in the late Tokugawa period increasingly sought a share of power in their communities in various ways: for example, through uprisings, lawsuits and public accusation in village assemblies. Fukaya Katsumi argues, for instance, that ordinary farmers became increasingly aware of their right to earn a living. They appealed to the political leaders of their village and beyond to secure their livelihood, a goal that was no longer possible without money to spend on food, clothes, tools, fertilizers, and so forth. Bokushi witnessed some cases of the obvious exercise of power by ordinary villagers. In 1810, a riot by young men over wealthy farmers’ unwillingness to sell their rice destroyed three

52 See, for example, Watanabe Takashi, Kinsei no gōnō to sonraku kyōdōtai (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1994); Ōtsuka Eiji, Nihon kinsei nōson kin’yu- shi no kenkyū (Hazekura shobō, 1996); and Ōshima Mario, ‘Kinsei kōki nōson shakai no moraru ekonomi ni tsuite’, Rekishigaku kenkyū, No. 685 (1996): 25-38.

houses in villages near Shiozawa. In 1813, Bokushi saw his close friend Inokuchi Mokei, the district headman of Shiozawa, forced to step down due to local criticism that began with people’s disapproval of the headman’s extravagance over the purchase of furniture, which probably in turn led to suspicions about his handling of public money.

Community leaders like Bokushi also needed to respond to occasional bad harvests. Bokushi’s ‘Eisei kirokushū’ shows that crop failures could result from rainy or cool summers, droughts, typhoons and floods. The worst case he recorded was the so-called Tenmei famine in 1783. Bokushi wrote that a bad harvest in that year nearly tripled the price of rice in Shiozawa, resulting in ‘countless deaths by starvation’. In years of bad harvest, village leaders like Bokushi were morally and politically obliged to secure food supplies for the poor. In 1816, for instance, Bokushi was involved in a rescue exercise for poor people in Shiozawa, supplying fifty hyō of rice to them at less than half price.

In such a context, members of the village establishment like Bokushi had to negotiate between their own immediate economic interests and the political stability of the village and the district. A good example of this dilemma and the negotiation between economy and politics is found in the abovementioned rice export to Kōzuke Province. In fact, Bokushi and his fellow landlord-merchants in Shiozawa were afraid that this ongoing transaction would lead to a rice shortage in Shiozawa. Farmers outside Shiozawa, by contrast, wanted to take advantage of such a profitable

55 Ibid., p. 52.
56 Ibid., p. 21.
57 Ibid., p. 60.
opportunity. In 1825 this disagreement went to arbitration by an intendant of Aizu han, who halved the amount of rice for export requested by opponents of Bokushi’s group, from 800 horse-loads (704 koku) to 400 horse-loads (352 koku).58

Members of the rural elite, on the one hand, needed to maintain a strong economic basis to keep themselves influential in their community, but, on the other hand, they were surely aware that selfish economic activities or mixing up of private and public duties could easily attract harsh criticism, lawsuits, or, possibly, violence from ordinary villagers or particular opponents. In other words, achieving the maximum economic success while preserving a harmonious relationship with their community would have been the basic desire of many wealthy landlords like Bokushi.

Using material produced by Bokushi or related to him, we have so far examined the link between agriculture and commerce at the level of the regional economy, and at the level of Bokushi’s household economy in his activities as a landlord. We will now analyse Bokushi’s pawnbroking business at the individual and everyday level.

**Bokushi as Rural Pawnbroker**

Rural pawnbrokers connected farmers to money, and thus functioned as one bridge between agriculture and commerce. Through Bokushi’s texts and other historical records, we can broadly illustrate how this happened on a day-to-day basis.

Looking back upon his past at the end of his life, Bokushi repeatedly claimed that pawnbroking had been his proud, lifelong occupation. In ‘Isho’, he wrote, for example, ‘I took extra care of the pawnshop, our primary business (daiichi no kashoku)’, and ‘essentially our property has grown solely because of pawnbroking’. To him, this was the family business (kagyō) that he had inherited from his parents, and he was therefore obliged to endeavour to make it prosper. While landholdings provided the Suzuki family with a substantial amount of income as well as conspicuous economic status in kokudaka terms, pawnbroking constituted Bokushi’s business life on a daily basis and thus also strongly influenced his sense of identity.

Pawnshops (shichiya) had functioned as casual moneylenders and shops selling second-hand goods to relatively poor people for a long time in Japan as well as other countries. It is believed that pawnbroking in Japan dates back to the fourteenth century, when it was a side business of sake-brewers in old cities such as Kyoto and Nara. The Tokugawa period witnessed the spread of pawnbrokers from cities to towns, and into rural areas, following the expansion of the money economy. According to Suzuki Kameji’s studies, this business became popular in the Kyōhō era (1716-35), particularly in Edo, Osaka and Kyoto, in terms of growth of the user population as well as the number of pawnshops, which now included a great many smaller brokers. Further popularization occurred in the decades

---

60 See Asao Naohiro et al. (eds), Nihon-shi jiten (Kadokawa shoten, 1996), p. 477.
around the Bunka and Bunsei eras (1804-30). In principle, the bakufu or han authorities did not want peasants to be involved in this moneylending business, which had the potential to disrupt the existing system of landownership and further stimulate the money economy. But in reality, it was increasingly difficult for the political authorities to ignore the need of rural inhabitants for some financial services. Therefore, they reluctantly recognized the occupation of ‘casual pawnbroker-farmer’ (nōma shichiya).

Naturally the first people to take up this opportunity in rural towns or villages were mostly sake-brewers, commodity traders or large landlords, all of whom had capital to lend.

The cases of the Suzuki family and their acquaintances confirm that pawnbroking was mixed with other businesses. The Suzuki family’s engagement with pawnbroking was initiated by Bokushi’s grandmother, who ‘saved her pocket money and started pawnbroking’ alongside her husband’s business, probably in the 1730s. But it was Bokushi’s father who developed the pawnshop as the main business of the family from 1769. Within several months of the opening of his shop, the value of outstanding pawned goods already reached as much as seventy-eight ryō.

A number of families seem to have engaged in this business from the second half of the eighteenth century in the Uonuma region. Within the Suzukis’ circle of acquaintances alone, their neighbour, the Takada-ya, also began pawnbroking in the 1750s according to Bokushi’s recollection, in

---

62 Ibid., p. 104.
addition to dealing in *chijimi* and operating as a landlord.\(^{65}\) Probably a little later, Bokushi’s brother-in-law, Ryoro, expanded his business into pawnbroking and moneylending on top of *sake*-brewing and rice-dealing.\(^{66}\) Seemingly, the Suzukis’ stem family, who had once faced bankruptcy, ventured into this business too.\(^{67}\)

The coincidence of the establishment of all these pawnshops during the second half of the eighteenth century can be accounted for by the spread of *chijimi*-weaving around this region. As discussed in the previous section, *chijimi* production kept growing in those years until it encompassed a very large number of peasant households. Every household that produced *chijimi* textile was able to count on receiving some cash at a *chijimi* market in spring or from brokers. The expected regular cash income from *chijimi*-weaving as a side job must have prompted many peasants to use the casual moneylending service provided by pawnbrokers. The relation between the *chijimi* industry and the establishment of many pawnshops in this region can be compared to Saitō Hiroshi’s findings about the link between silk production and the growth of pawnshops in the Tama region of Musashi Province. Saitō has demonstrated that many peasants borrowed money from pawnshops not only to secure their livelihoods temporarily, but also for business needs, such as buying raw silk. Some silk-weavers even pawned

\(^{65}\) ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 914.

\(^{66}\) ‘Imanari-shi keizu’, ms. Copy kindly provided by the Imanari Family in Muikamachi.

\(^{67}\) There is a note in ‘Isho’ that in 1829, the Yoshino-ya, the stem family of the Suzuki clan, liquidized their stock that had been pawned by customers. In SBZ1, p. 929.
their product if the market price was low, and redeemed the pawned silk to sell at the market when the price was high enough.  

Bokushi was responsible for the management of his family’s pawnshop from around 1790 until his retirement in 1830. His pawnshop business during these four decades seems to have reflected the general economic cycle that was evident at the national level. This cycle started with a recession in the Kansei era (1789-1801) after the Tenmei famine, which was at its worst in 1783 and 1786, and then progressed to the heyday of the Tokugawa economy centring on the Bunka and Bunsei eras. Bokushi recalled the early years of his management as follows. He suffered ‘a loss of as much as twenty to thirty ryō’ every year at this stage, but had just been able to manage the business without selling land due to ‘a lucky win in the community credit association (tanomoshikō)’. From around 1800, however, his pawnshop business seems to have grown. This is evident in the construction of a new storehouse for pawned goods, which was completed in 1805 at a cost of more than sixty-seven ryō. Bokushi stressed the importance of the storehouse for his family, saying ‘the pawn storehouse is the primary asset of our business’.

---

68 Saitō Hiroshi, Shichiya-shi no kenkyū (Shin hyōronsha, 1989), pp. 280-81.
69 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 444. The tanomoshikō was a kind of benevolent fund association formed by a number of community members. Normally the association collected premiums from its members and chose a winner by lottery every year. Every member sooner or later won possession of the fund once in a cycle, as previous winners were excluded from each draw.
Bokushi’s heyday as a pawnbroker is portrayed in ‘Isho’, which provides a good illustration of his job around 1808 in the booming economy of the Bunka era.  

In those days, many people came to my shop to pawn various things even before breakfast. So, I had to assess things they brought to pawn one after another just by a quick look. Holding a rice cake for breakfast in my hand, I attended my customers who were sitting around a fireplace in the kitchen. Some said to me, ‘I’ve been waiting for you since dawn’, and others just unwrapped their goods to pawn. They grabbed my arm and didn’t let it go even if I said, ‘Let me go and wee first!’ After sunset, I recorded all the transactions in the notebooks, and then heaved a sigh of relief. ‘It’s indeed like a battlefield in peace time’: we used to laugh like that.

This episode confirms the vigour of the rural economy in this period. People’s immediate needs for money are clearly evident, even given the possibility of exaggeration since Bokushi was recalling his days of happiness and energy. His customers were ordinary villagers who brought small items to pawn. The pawned goods mentioned in his texts include hoes, haori-coats, sashes, hatchets, dressing tables, telescopes, wigs and supposed Chinese medicine. Although not mentioned by Bokushi, other studies

---

71 Bokushi’s recollection cited here does not specify a year or period. But a similar account in ‘Yonabegusa’ refers to his son’s age as ‘fifteen or sixteen years old’, which would be 1807-08. See SBZ1, p. 472.
72 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 897.
73 Ibid., pp. 901, 929, 954-55. This Chinese medicine turned out to be a fake.
suggest that cotton garments were the most popular item pawned by ordinary people. Researchers suggest roughly eighty percent of goods pawned in the Tokugawa period overall were clothes. Other popular items included mosquito nets, futon, sashes, and grains.\textsuperscript{74}

This description of Bokushi’s pawnshop also suggests the modest size of rural merchants’ businesses. Bokushi’s pawnshop operation still largely relied on his own labour, with assistance from his wife, son and daughter but without a paid store clerk (\textit{tedai}) on a regular basis,\textsuperscript{75} even though in this period the Suzukis must have been regarded as an up-and-coming wealthy family as they moved towards possession of landholding worth eighty \textit{koku} in \textit{kokudaka} in 1820.

Bokushi’s day-to-day work in his shop was intricate. First, he evaluated goods brought by customers to pawn, and then offered a loan. He issued a wooden plate as proof of pawn (\textit{shichifuda}) to the pawner, and recorded the details of the loan and pawned goods, firstly in a desk-top notebook for miscellaneous records (\textit{daifukuchō}), and secondly in a formal registry of pawned goods (\textit{banzukechō}). The pawned goods were carefully wrapped in homemade persimmon-tanned paper to protect them from worms and moisture, and given a serial number, before being stored in the Suzuki-ya’s warehouse. Bokushi proudly writes that the number of pieces of tanned paper once reached ‘several thousands’.\textsuperscript{76} Before the repayment was due, he issued a reminder to the pawner. In case of failure to redeem

\textsuperscript{75} ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 897. The family, however, always employed some servants, usually one male and one female. See ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 22-96.
\textsuperscript{76} ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, pp. 889, 914.
the pawned goods, Bokushi sent pawners a notice of foreclosure 
(kotowarijō), and then transferred the record of the item to another notebook
called a kotowarichō. Then, the unredeemed goods were made available for
sale. Some were displayed in the shop, and others remained stored in the
warehouse until customers asked for them.\footnote{See ibid., pp. 901, 928, 943, 948.}

The main purpose of this business was, however, to make profit
from repayment of loans with interest, rather than from sales of unredeemed
goods. In the case of a pawnshop in Tōkamachi, the annual balance sheet
for the year 1833 indicates that a profit of approximately thirty-five ryō
came from loan and interest repayment, while sales of goods made a profit
of only about eighteen ryō.\footnote{Tōkamachishi-shi hensan inkai (ed.), Tōkamachishi-shi shiryōhen, vol. 5
(Tōkamachi, Niigata: Tōkamachi shiyakusho, 1993), pp. 421-22.} As for Bokushi’s own shop, no data are
available except his brief note that ‘pawnbroking was making an annual
profit of only about twenty ryō or so’ in his early years in the business.\footnote{‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 895.}
Neither does he mention the interest rates for loans at his shop. A relevant
document shows, however, that the monthly rates in the castle town of
Nagaoka were 1.25 to 2.5 percent (fifteen to thirty percent as an annual rate),
depending on the amount of the loan.\footnote{See Tochioshi-shi henshū inkai (ed.), Tochioshi-shi, vol. 1 (Tochio,
Niigata: Tochio shiyakusho, 1987), p. 700.}

Bokushi’s pawnbroking business eventually reached a crossroads
due to changes in the economic environment, and in his family structure.
The new conditions led to tensions and disagreements among family
members that are clearly reflected in Bokushi’s writings. The Suzuki
family’s pawnshop business started declining in the 1820s. In 1824,
Bokushi wrote that the shop was now not as busy as before, and in 1839, he recorded regretfully that ‘more than half of the pawn wrappers’, which had once numbered ‘several thousands’, were ‘now empty’. In the late 1830s, under the headship of Bokushi’s son-in-law, Kan’emon (1798-1883), the family ceased pawnbroking, and became a sake-brewer. This change came around the time of Bokushi’s retirement, illness and death. Along with pawnbrokers, sake-brewers were also enjoying the benefits of the spread of the money economy into rural communities, and the consequent adoption by villagers of more materialistic lifestyles. Kan’emon’s decision to shift to the brewing business turned out to be right in the end. However, Bokushi was wary of the change right up until his death, recording both his own criticism of Kan’emon’s decision and the disagreements it brought. We will fully examine this dispute between the two men in the next chapter.

Although Bokushi insisted in his writings that the Suzuki-ya should have continued pawnbroking, he admitted the growing difficulties in conducting this business in Shiozawa. According to ‘Isho’ in 1839, old-established pawnshops were closing down, until the Suzuki-ya was the only one left in Shiozawa that had operated continuously from the mid-eighteenth century. Bokushi wondered if the reason for the slump in their business was that ‘people may have pawned everything they can’, or if the problem was the emergence of newer pawnshops. The economy had by this time turned to recession, thanks to the so-called Tenpō famine, which

82 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 914.
83 Ibid., p. 898.
started with a disastrous crop failure in 1833.\textsuperscript{84} Bokushi’s region was no exception to the general suffering. The price of rice in Shiozawa rose more than fourfold between 1833 and 1837.\textsuperscript{85} Given that pawnshops were a casual financial service for ordinary people, the demand on pawnbroking was directly affected by the vigour of the consumer economy. At the beginning of this economic downturn, people might have pawned a number of things in order to solve their financial difficulties. Within a few years, however, pawning would not have been an option as a temporary solution for many people, as they would have had fewer goods left to pawn. Moreover, in bad times, fewer people bought unredeemed goods.

The other comment by Bokushi, that the Suzuki family business had been harmed by the emergence of newer pawnshops, probably indicates that this industry was being restructured at that time. Suzuki Kameji shows that pawnbrokers spread further into rural areas during the Bunka-Bunsei eras, along with the consumption boom of that time. These new brokers included many ordinary farmers with small capital, who worked as subsidiary pawnbrokers (\textit{ko shichiya}) under the umbrella of a parent-pawnbroker (\textit{oya shichiya}) in a larger town.\textsuperscript{86} If this happened in the Uonuma area too, established pawnshops in a rural town, like the Suzuki-ya, might have been forced to give way to new competitors in surrounding villages, unless they could somehow transform themselves to take a more advantageous position

\textsuperscript{84} On the economic disaster as well as social and political problems during the \textit{Tenpō} era (1830-44), see, for example, Harold Bolitho, ‘The \textit{Tenpō} Crisis’, in Marius B. Jansen (ed.), \textit{The Nineteenth Century}, vol. 5 of \textit{The Cambridge History of Japan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 116-67.
\textsuperscript{85} See Appendix.
in the local economy. One fact supports the supposition that this trend might have been emerging in the Uonuma area as elsewhere: in 1845 one widow of a peasant in a small village near Tōkamachi did apply for permission to open a pawnshop.87

Bokushi and Kan’emon differed in their reactions to this difficult situation. Unlike the old man Bokushi, Kan’emon did not see any necessity to insist on being a pawnbroker. Rather than defending the stagnating family business from new competitors, he seemed more interested in the pursuit of larger profits in growing sectors such as sake-brewing and moneylending. Kan’emon started sake-brewing around 1835, investing about two hundred ryō in buying a licence and facility for this business.88 But the venture outraged Bokushi, partly because he had been totally ignored in the discussion about making this landmark change in the family business.89 Besides his feelings of anger and humiliation, Bokushi expressed his concern about the risk inherent in sake-brewing. In his view, sake-brewing brought prestige of a sort, but was not good ‘for making money’, as had been proved by the fact that ‘many brewers have soon come to sell their licences to someone else’. Bokushi was also afraid of the rapid expansion of Kan’emon’s business concerns. Kan’emon was seemingly involved not only in brewing, but also in such a large scale of moneylending

89 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 945.
that he ‘borrowed several hundred ryō’ from a larger moneylender, and ‘made loans of twenty or thirty ryō or more’ to local people.90

Bokushi’s worries notwithstanding, the Suzuki-ya’s business and property grew further, and the family became known as a leading sake-brewer in the region in the Meiji period (1868-1912). A tax document in 1876 shows that the Suzuki-ya was the highest payer of tax on sake-brewing among fifty brewers in the district.91 The family also grew further as a great landlord. According to surveys of official value of land owned by large landholders in 1892 and 1909, the Suzuki family was placed sixth and tenth, respectively, in Minami Uonuma County. In Shiozawa Village, the family was placed first in 1892 and second in 1909.92 Data suggest that their land probably grew to as much as 350 to 400 tan (87.5 to 100 acres) by 1909,93 which was five to six times larger than Bokushi’s holding in 1820 if my estimation above was correct.

As depicted above, Bokushi’s everyday life centring on his pawnshop business was hectic and labour-intensive. This is not what we normally imagine as typical of the wealthy leisured class, and it also seems different from the life of a village-based gônô because of the separation in Bokushi’s case of daily life and work from agricultural production. On the

90 Ibid., p. 888.
92 Ibid., pp. 443-44. In 1879, Uonuma was divided into three counties: Minami (south) Uonuma, Naka (middle) Uonuma and Kita (north) Uonuma.
93 I have not found a record of the total area of the land owned by the Suzuki family at this point. But the 1909 survey mentioned above shows the value of the Suzuki family’s property as 10,918 yen, while that of another landlord was 16,127 yen. This landlord’s total area of agricultural land was given as 599 tan in a 1905 document (ibid., p. 444). Another case indicates 16,680 yen for 544 tan of land. I have used these figures as the basis of my calculation of the Suzuki family’s holdings here.
other hand, Bokushi’s business practice probably reflects the scale and daily routine of a typical family business in a rural town. The hard work of the family head as well as his wife and children was still essential in order to sustain and develop the household’s economic position. Yet, as the case of Bokushi and Kan’emon suggests, there could also be tensions and disagreements among family members relating to business management. Moreover, the changing economy brought additional new conditions for the operation of rural businesses. I will now further consider Bokushi’s business practice and the tensions and problems associated with it through a focus on his business policies and attitudes.

**Bokushi’s Business Values: the Merchant Code**

Despite his formal status as a farmer, and his location in the countryside, Bokushi appears to have strongly espoused the dominant Tokugawa-period merchant values, which had been developed mainly in large-scale merchant houses in the cities. In ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Isho’, Bokushi placed an emphasis, for instance, on the prime importance of the family business and on diligence, frugality, and strictness in money matters; a habit of record-keeping; and participation in educational and cultural activities as long as they were useful for the family business, or at least did not impede it. Most of these attitudes closely echo those expressed in the merchant codes discussed by J. Mark Ramseyer and others as the essence of merchant family precepts. Good examples include the house codes produced by Shimai Sōshitsu (1539-1615) and Mitsui Takafusa (1684-1748), both
famous figures in early modern commerce.\textsuperscript{94} Thus it can be said that in the realm of attitudes towards family business as well as other areas, Bokushi was once again situated on the bridge between the merchants’ world of commerce and the farmers’ agricultural community. Bokushi’s texts provide evidence that rural merchants had begun to accept a code which had originally developed among urban, rich merchants, and to integrate it with their own thinking.

Bokushi’s writings are, however, significant far more than this. They also reveal various tensions among rural people who encountered this kind of code. The degree to which the values encapsulated in these house codes were actually applied to everyday life differed according to each individual, and such differences in practice sometimes caused problems. Each individual also experienced dilemmas and behaved inconsistently. Thus, in this section I explore Bokushi’s translation of orthodox merchant values into his own business and his own life, and then discuss the problems that he experienced while putting his economic ideas into practice.

The need to give priority to business is the basis of the most conspicuous mottos in Bokushi’s ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Isho’. He repeatedly says, for example, ‘business should always come first’ (shinshōmochi o

senshin daiichi) or ‘put economy first’ (keizai daiichi).

His articulation of this priority seems to be related to the economic ethics for commoners developed by urban thinkers like Nishikawa Joken (1648-1724) and Ishida Baigan (1685-1744) during the eighteenth century. Although there is no direct evidence that Bokushi read books by Joken or Baigan, he clearly accepted their versions of the key virtues such as modesty, diligence and frugality. He also followed Baigan’s logic about merchants’ profit-making. As Tsuda Hideo has pointed out, Baigan opposed selfish or immoral commercial activities but advocated ‘reasonable profit-making’ for the sake of uplifting one’s household economy because, Baigan emphasized, each household was given an important role in supporting the status quo; therefore the household must remain viable as the most basic unit of society. Some such logic appears to explain the co-existence of Bokushi’s emphasis on the importance of the household economy and his appreciation of the existing political and economic regime, both of which are repeatedly shown in ‘Yonabegusa’. Aiming at his descendants, Bokushi wrote, for

---

95 See, for example, ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 444, and ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 899.


97 Tsuda Hideo, ‘Kyōiku no fukyū to shingaku’, in Kinsei 4, vol. 12 of Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi (Iwanami shoten, 1976), pp. 159-60. Also see Bellah, Tokugawa Religion, pp. 155-65. Ramseyer, however, argues that before Baigan, such a view was already established in some merchant house codes of the seventeenth century. Ramseyer, ‘Thrift and Diligence’, p. 219.
instance, ‘I hope you will all love your work, practise frugality, enjoy happiness and health, establish yourselves and promote the prosperity of the family’. In the same document, he also wrote, ‘as we were born during the auspicious reign of the lord (arigataki miyo), we must repay the benevolence of the lord (kun on)’.99

It is likely that Bokushi developed his thinking about household economy through his engagement with other local landlord-merchants, more than from books. It can be said that Bokushi’s articulation of the ‘business first’ policy represents the discourse that surrounded him concerning the household economy. In ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi lists a number of ‘admirable’ relatives and acquaintances in the locality in order to show ‘role models’ to his descendants.100 Among them, it was Imanari Ryoro, Bokushi’s brother-in-law, whom he singled out as ‘my teacher in business since I was a child’.101 Bokushi says that he learnt and adopted Ryoro’s methods of business management while staying many times with the Imanari family. In fact, not only in business but also in numerous other areas including family affairs and artistic activities, the influence of Ryoro on Bokushi was significant. Clear evidence of the common values of the two men is contained in Ryoro’s essay manuscript, ‘Bujian shizenshō’, written from 1823 to 1824, in which we find considerable similarities with Bokushi’s writing. About the importance of family business, for example, Ryoro writes that ‘we must understand that family business (kagyō) is

---

98 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 470.
99 Ibid., pp. 458-59.
100 Ibid., pp. 478-85.
101 Ibid., p. 482.
fundamental to the world (sekai no konpon), and thus is one of the most important things for humans.\footnote{102}{Imanari Bujian, ‘Bujian shizenshō’, in Niigataken (ed.), Niigataken-shi shiryozen (hereafter NKS-S), vol. 11 (Niigata: Niigata, 1983), p. 186.}

The stress on giving priority to the family business naturally encouraged people to take a businesslike attitude towards money-related matters. Bokushi honestly admitted the power of money in the real world.

Money may bring happiness, anger, misery or pleasure to people. Those who do have money have much treasure and food in their houses. Those who do not have it have only flies in their kitchens. This is true anywhere, whether in China or in Japan, whether in the capital city or in a village.\footnote{103}{‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 470.}

Bokushi also respected Ryoro for his principle of separating money matters from human relations. Ryoro said to Bokushi that ‘in money matters, we are not relatives or friends’.\footnote{104}{‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 470.} However, such an attitude sometimes created tension in the community. Bokushi writes that he heard someone saying that he, Bokushi, ‘is not himself patient in money matters though he always says his motto is patience’.\footnote{105}{‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 470.} In the face of this criticism, Bokushi defended, at least in his writing, the strong actions and words that were occasionally unavoidable in his conflicts with others over money. According to him, the head of a merchant house needed to be strong in the performance of his role, otherwise the family business would soon teeter on the brink of ruin. He argued that ‘being patient’ with others should never

\footnote{103}{‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 470.}
\footnote{104}{‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 904.}
\footnote{105}{‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 466.}
mean ‘erasing an entry in the account book’ or ‘giving up a piece of land’ to ‘those who make unreasonable demands’. To borrow Ōshima Mario’s perspective, we can see here a clash between the ‘moral economy’ of the traditional community and the ‘political economy’ of a modernizing society.

Meanwhile, the articulation in various places of the idea that ‘business comes first’ indicates that members of the rural elite now had temptations other than business affairs. Bokushi’s writing offers good information on this point, especially when he lists what his descendants should refrain from doing, or should think carefully about. Gambling and indulgence in the pleasure quarters were things to be absolutely avoided, according to Bokushi. Moderate and pleasant drinking ‘could be good for the health’ but heavy drinking would ruin the household, he writes. In the matters of clothing, food and housing, Bokushi urged his descendants to be consciously modest, because, apparently, people were increasingly tempted to chase after material goods even in rural areas. Housing was, however, one area in which he admitted his failure to maintain modesty, after building a large new house himself in 1825.

Among a range of temptations, it was the arts that Bokushi most carefully considered in relation to his ‘business first’ policy. Unlike the other pursuits, the arts were clearly given a positive evaluation by Bokushi on the condition that involvement in the arts should not affect the family business adversely. Such positive but limited appreciation of the arts by

---

107 Ōshima, ‘Kinsei kōki nōsonshakai no moraru ekonomī ni tsuite’.
commoners has been labelled by several historians as ‘gyōyo-fūga-ron’ or ‘the policy that the arts should only be a hobby’. Takahashi Satoshi, for example, explains that this attitude became popular among commoners thanks to Baigan’s quotation of a famous phrase from The Analects of Confucius: ‘if you still have energy to spare after doing all the essentials, study literature’. Sugi Hitoshi points out a close link between this attitude and the popularization of haikai among provincial people after the mid-eighteenth century. Sugi argues that the spread of ‘gyōyo-fūga-ron’ indicates that provincial people had begun to justify their participation in the arts as leisure activities that enriched their everyday lives.

As Sugi recognizes, Bokushi’s writing also confirms that the ideas behind ‘gyōyo-fūga-ron’ were put into practice in rural communities. Bokushi says, for example, that his father had alerted him to the above-mentioned sentence from The Analects of Confucius, and that Bokushi had therefore ‘been practising the arts for pleasure’ in his free time. Bokushi claims that his own cultural activities, such as reading books,

---


112 See Sugi Hitoshi, Kinsei no chiiki to zaison bunka: gijutsu to shōhin to fūga no kōryū (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2001), p. 46.


114 ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 690.

writing letters, drawing pictures, composing poems and writing literary texts, had all been carried out after the close of business for the day.\textsuperscript{116} This discipline was consciously maintained, he said, because he was afraid that his ‘great fondness for the arts’ would ‘impoverish the household economy’.\textsuperscript{117} He portrayed himself as a principled person with great affection for the arts, and as such he is representative of those who enjoyed artistic hobbies in parallel with economic pursuits, thus expressing the spirit of ‘\textit{gyōyo-fūga-ron}’.

Yet, Bokushi was not as consistent as he claimed in prioritizing economic activities. In fact, his words sometimes sound like an excuse for his unprofitable involvement in hobbies. For example, after cautioning his descendants against indulgence in clothes and other frivolities, Bokushi admitted that his collection of artworks as well as ‘correspondence with many artistic figures’ were his own ‘drawback’. He sounds defensive when he says that ‘these activities might seem wrong, but they are not, because pleasure has always come after business’.\textsuperscript{118} This suggests that Bokushi had suffered a certain amount of criticism from family and community members for his devotion to various cultural activities. As we will see in later chapters, the amount of time, money and energy that Bokushi spent in his pursuit of the arts was by no means negligible. In particular, the publication of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} was eventually very expensive for his household. There must have been conflict and compromise in Bokushi’s own mind in his pursuit of both business and the arts. His hobbies also caused tension

\textsuperscript{116}‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 443, 448, 451.
\textsuperscript{117}‘Beppon Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 462.
\textsuperscript{118}‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 467.
between him and Kan’emon, who was less interested in the arts than Bokushi, as we will see in the next chapter. If Hokuetsu seppu had not in the end been published under Bokushi’s name, all his devotion to the arts would probably have been judged quite negatively by those around him.

Bokushi’s emphasis on the importance of record-keeping also derived both from general necessity in business and from his personal fondness for writing. Bokushi repeatedly stressed the importance for household management of keeping journals. Here, too, he expresses respect for Ryoro for his ‘great liking for keeping journals’, saying that he learnt from Ryoro how to organize all the family documents. For merchants, Bokushi says, journals are like their ‘organs’ or ‘soul’. Bokushi’s claim makes sense in terms of the rural economic practice described above, which was increasingly based on documents as the money economy developed. However, we should also note that the reason Bokushi repeatedly emphasized the importance of record-keeping was that his successor, Kan’emon, did not continue Bokushi’s longstanding habits in that respect. In ‘Isho’, Bokushi strongly and repeatedly criticizes Kan’emon for neglecting the family business journals. This difference between father and son-in-law in record-keeping suggests the existence of individual variation in rural landlord-merchants’ business practices. While careful record-keeping was probably considered necessary in theory by all of the landlord-merchants, individual idiosyncrasies always caused their practices

119 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 928.
120 Ibid., pp. 919, 945.
121 Ibid., pp. 901, 919, 921, 928, 947-48.
to vary. Personal relationships, emotions and domestic power struggles also affected Bokushi and Kan’emon, as we will see in the next chapter.

A similar problem is found in Bokushi’s translation of the abstract virtues of diligence and frugality into everyday practice. Diligence and frugality had always been highly regarded in orthodox discourses, especially for peasants. However, the context in which these virtues were stressed changed over time to some extent. In a conventional sense, diligence and frugality were a key to survival, as Bokushi indicates when referring to the saying, ‘poverty cannot catch up with a hard worker’. But in the new economic context of Bokushi’s day, he also urges his descendants to be diligent and frugal in order not to be tempted to laziness by newly acquired wealth. In this regard, as Noboru Tomonari argues, Bokushi’s articulation of the importance of these virtues represents a certain class ideology of the gōnō, who made large profits in the changing rural economy but still worried about the uncertainty of their future.

Besides this ideological trend, however, I argue that Bokushi’s personality and daily work habits were strong individual factors in forming his code of practice. He claimed to be a workaholic. He says proudly, for example, ‘working is my disease’, ‘I am addicted to work’, and ‘jobs to do are everywhere I look’. His main occupation, pawnbroking, in itself encompassed many meticulous jobs, in terms both of physical labour and of administration. But Bokushi’s self-imposed work covered far more than the head of a wealthy landlord-merchant house was generally supposed to do. It

---

122 ‘Beppon Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 492.
ranged, for example, from weeding the garden, to fixing all sorts of utensils and furniture, to carpentry. He kept a notebook handy to organize all his tasks, even marking daytime jobs with a circle and night jobs with a black dot. Bokushi’s insistence on everything being organized is well represented by his list of ‘170 to 180 containers’ that he made himself so that he could store everything in his shop and house in good order.

With such work habits, Bokushi saw Kan’emon as totally misguided because he was ‘aiming to earn a large amount of money in one transaction’ while living in comfort ‘just like an old rentier’. The right way to do business must have been, Bokushi believed, through diligent and cautious work, ‘just like climbing a ladder step by step’ as he himself had throughout his life. Bokushi writes in 1839 that because the Suzuki-ya dealt with a large amount of money, as much as several hundred ryō in total every year, it ‘is now called the number one house’ in Shiozawa; however, this fame affected the attitude of all members of the family towards work and lifestyle, making them inclined to laziness and luxury. Kan’emon probably did not share this view, but perhaps believed that the economic growth of the Suzuki household now allowed, or even required, a change of house-style. Bokushi’s criticism and concern notwithstanding, Kan’emon proved to be a talented businessman, bringing further prosperity to the Suzuki household.

* * * * * * *

125 Ibid., pp. 932, 942-43.
126 Ibid., p. 889.
127 See ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 485-86.
128 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 901.
129 Ibid., p. 940.
The trajectory of the Suzuki family’s economic development from the 1760s onwards presents one vivid example of the process by which an upper-class family in a rural town grew into great landlord-merchants. Such a transformation of the family’s identity happened because commerce became an economically viable alternative or supplement to farming in this region. As was the case in many other regions, significant opportunities for farmers to grow into merchants were brought by the cottage industries that produced local specialities, the development of which was strongly related to the economic boom in major cities. Specifically, the chijimi-textile industry in the Uonuma region brought money to almost every household, and thus greatly stimulated the circulation of money. The Suzuki family businesses in pawnbroking, moneylending and sake-brewing undoubtedly benefited from such lively circulation of money in the region.

Bokushi’s writings also demonstrate, however, that the development of the money economy to some extent shook the foundation of the agrarian community. Bokushi’s acquisition of land constitutes evidence that landowning patterns in this area changed significantly over his lifetime, as did social relations. Accumulation of property and wealth by those who were successful in commercial activities, and loss or pawning of property by those who were not, certainly affected the previously established social order in the village. For example, the status of the ‘honke’ (stem family) of the Suzuki clan was undermined after the exchange of houses between Jōemon and his elder brother. Furthermore, Bokushi’s status as ‘village elder’ did not result from his original position in the social hierarchy and would not have been granted without his acquired wealth. Bokushi and
other landlord-merchants located in rural towns also developed a certain sense of identity different from that of village-based farmers, as we will see in more detail in later chapters.

Moreover, Bokushi’s texts also show the existence of variation in the rural townsmen’s adoption of merchant modes of behaviour and codes of practice. While sharing many interests and norms in common, different individuals had somewhat different views on and practices in economic activity, lifestyle and moral code. These different views created tensions and conflicts among family members like Bokushi and Kan’emon, or more broadly in the community. Such tensions and conflicts highlight individual idiosyncrasies in the construction of individual economic lives. Compared with Jōemon’s venture in the chijimi business and Kan’emon’s investment in sake-brewing, Bokushi’s business practice as a pawnbroker and landlord remained conservative and relatively non-entrepreneurial during the whole of his career. His conspicuous meticulousness and industriousness assisted him in all his work in his pawnbroking and landlord businesses, but probably made it less likely that he would embrace other opportunities.

Bokushi successfully manoeuvred to establish himself as a wealthy farmer-merchant at the meeting-point of agricultural production and commercial activities. That process was partially a class-wide action by elite families in rural towns, who were gradually redefining themselves as landlord-merchants. It was, however, also a very personal process of redefining his own identity, which inevitably created differences between Bokushi and others, even members of his own family. Such differences, and related tensions between him and his family members, will be further
examined in the next chapter, in which I will show how Bokushi interacted with the values and structure of the ‘ie’, the household, in the context of family life in the provinces in late-Tokugawa Japan. The meeting-point that I will now focus on concerns ‘household’ and ‘individual’, as I analyse how Bokushi negotiated the boundary between these two frameworks.
Chapter Three

The Household and Individual Lives:

Bokushi’s Family Documents

Just as Bokushi was part of a trend in which rural townsmen were adopting the values associated with urban business, so too was the ideology of the ‘household’ itself spreading at this time. The notion of the ‘household’ or ‘ie’ was a developing part of the social framework for commoners in the Tokugawa period.¹ Commoners’ growing acceptance of the notion of the ‘household’ and the orthodox values centring on it is evident in the production of a great many family documents by members of the rural elite, who followed earlier practice by aristocrats, samurai and wealthy merchants in the cities in this respect.² Production of such texts was one more way in which members of the rural elite crossed previously conceived boundaries separating the urban social classes from residents of rural areas. Bokushi was one rural commoner who eagerly adopted the upper-class practice of producing family documents.

² Kakunshū, a collection of Japanese house codes compiled by Yamamoto Shinkō, provides good evidence of the spread of the notion of the ‘household’ from aristocrats, to daimyo families, to wealthy urban merchants, to provincial merchants and farmers. Of the nineteen documents in the volume, three were produced by aristocrats including emperors, in 897, 947 and 1330; seven were produced by daimyo, in ca 1256, ca 1480, ca 1544, 1623, 1659?, 1692 and 1776?; four were produced by urban merchants, in ca 1610, 1614?, ca 1710 and 1897; one was produced by a rural merchant, in 1843?; and four were produced by wealthy farmers, in 1747, 1784 (two documents) and 1873. Yamamoto Shinkō (comp.), Kakunshū (Heibonsha, 2001).
Scholars have typically interpreted this trend as a sign that ‘household’ norms were assuming authority over the individual lives of family members. Yet, the case of Bokushi’s family documents shows that relations between ‘household’ and individual could be very complicated, and that even the boom in producing family histories and other documents was inherently ambiguous, in that there could be a considerable gap between the ideal households that appeared in such documents, and the reality of daily life. This chapter examines Bokushi’s interaction with the notion of the ‘household’, by analysing the following documents: ‘Eisei kirokushū’ (Perpetual record), his family chronicle compiled from 1817 to 1828; ‘Yonabegusa’ (Notes while burning the midnight oil), his autobiographical essay produced in 1824; and ‘Isho’ (Final testament), the long record of his final words to his son-in-law and other descendants, written in 1839.3

Previous studies have established that members of the rural elite, including Bokushi, had a strong awareness of and commitment to building household discipline.4 I carry the examination of Bokushi’s texts one step further, and reveal a more complex picture of his family life than has previously been apparent. By focusing on both Bokushi’s efforts and his problems in building the values of the ‘household’, I will demonstrate that promoting the notion of the household did not bring unity and concord to Bokushi’s family life. I will further show that in the case of Bokushi’s

---

4 See, for example, Anne Walthall, ‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth Century Japan’, *Journal of Social History*, vol. 23 (1990): 463-83.
family, the concept of the ‘household’ was relatively ineffective as a method of controlling the lives of its members, and was itself deployed in different ways according to the interest of any individual.

I suggest that the reason for such a complex relation between ‘household’ and individuals is that commoners’ increasing interest in establishing the ‘household’ as a norm was intrinsically linked with their simultaneous focus on their own individual lives, a focus that is evident in a number of personal documents. The growth of interest in the two areas together was often problematic when individuals had different views from each other, and even paradoxical if the ‘household’ norms were supposed to govern individual lives. I will discuss this issue in three areas of Bokushi’s experience: the writing of his family history, his marriages and domestic disputes within his household. I argue that paradoxically, Bokushi was simultaneously constituting household norms and creating a record that made it clear that his family was often flouting those norms.

**Formal Discourse and Private Voices in Bokushi’s Family History**

Provincial communities in Japan went through significant changes in family structure and norms relating to the family in the Tokugawa period. Structurally, traditional consanguineous clans had split into small, economically independent but socially linked peasant households. The Tokugawa period was an important time for the shaping of the orthodox concept of family or ‘household’, a process that ultimately affected much of the population. According to Ōtō Osamu, for example, the core of the concept of the household was constituted by the specific ‘household name’
(kamei or yagō); ‘household property’ (kasen); ‘family occupation’ (kagyo); and the practice of ‘ancestor worship’ using family graves, a family Buddhist altar and a death register roll (kakochō; lit., records of the past). People’s belief that they must endeavour to perpetuate all these items governing the identity of their family was also important.\(^5\)

In the trend towards establishing the ‘household’ as a norm, many members of the rural elite produced their own family histories. Previously, writing family history had been almost exclusively the preserve of a small number of people in the upper class, such as aristocrats and members of old-established samurai families. In the Tokugawa period, however, the practice of writing family history and constructing family trees spread into newer families in the samurai class and to successful merchants, before the rural elite also began to take part.\(^6\) The main purpose was to establish the value of the writer’s own family origin. Therefore, where possible, the writers of such family histories linked their ancestors to traditional authority figures, ranging from the imperial family to local warriors. In fact, many fake family trees were constructed. It is believed that some families bought family trees from someone else, and others asked genealogists to invent them for their families.\(^7\)

‘Eisei kirokushū’ is Bokushi’s direct response to this trend of producing family histories. ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Isho’, as comments on Bokushi’s own life and thinking, also essentially concern the Suzuki

---


\(^6\) See, for example, Yamamoto Shinkō, ‘Kaisetsu’, in Yamamoto (comp.), *Kakunshū*, pp. 392-410.

\(^7\) Ōtō, *Kinsei nōmin to ie, mura, kokka*, pp. 178-79.
household as a whole. Unlike typical family histories, however, these texts by Bokushi incorporate some private voices which do not necessarily affirm the unity of the family. Here I focus on such discrepancies between formal discourse and private voices in Bokushi’s written record of his family. I show that at least in the case of Bokushi, the values embedded in his formal family history do not represent the actual human relationships in his household, and that instances of tension were recorded by Bokushi himself. I discuss this theme as it appears in two basic areas of family history: the record of ancestors and the record for future use of the current activities of the family.

In the effort to establish the family history, Bokushi followed a common practice in first clarifying the family’s origin. His sources were the usual material: Buddhist death register rolls and the oral history transmitted to him by his parents. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bokushi’s texts maintain that the family’s genealogical origin lay in the samurai class. This was a common claim among members of the rural elite, made in an attempt to establish and strengthen the identity and values of their own households, by discriminating them from ordinary peasant families. Even in rural areas like Shiozawa, some elite families held good records of family trees, and by Bokushi’s day, they had become keenly interested in family lineages. For example, Bokushi mentions the family lineage of the district headman of Shiozawa; this family claimed that its origin lay in an aristocrat-
samurai family in Kyoto in the tenth century. Bokushi must also have known that the Imanari family in Muikamachi had proud family trees that claimed their ultimate origin in Emperor Seiwa (reigned 858-78). Such records of local elite families probably inspired Bokushi to present his account of the Suzuki family history at the beginning of ‘Eisei kirokushū’. It is also likely that Bokushi’s interest in this exercise increased as a result of his correspondence with his literary friends, including Takizawa Bakin, who later produced a lengthy family history of his own.

In addition to tracing the bloodline, in praising the ancestors it was essential to enumerate their achievements. Bokushi’s texts show how the legends surrounding his ancestors were constructed and with what emphases. There seem to be three areas of achievement on which Bokushi placed great value when he aimed to encourage admiration of his ancestors, although we do not know how much Bokushi himself modified the original accounts on which he relied.

The most powerful factor was ancestors’ involvement in important historic events. The Suzukis’ founder was believed to have been a local warrior, Suzuki Kunimune (1524-78), who fought for Uesugi Kenshin (1530-78), an Echigo-based heroic warlord of the sixteenth century.

---

11 ‘Imanari-shi keizu’, a manuscript held by the Imanari family, Muikamachi, Niigata.
12 Takizawa Bakin wrote a brief history of his ancestors in a letter to Bokushi in 1818. (See ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 238-40.) Bakin later compiled five volumes of his family history including thorough research on his samurai extraction. See Takizawa Bakin (annotated by Kimura Miyogo), Aga hotoke no ki: Takizawa Bakin kaki (Yagi shoten, 1987).
13 Miya Eiji writes that Suzuki Kunimune was a high-class samurai in the Uesugi clan and owned a fief of 5,000 koku near the Shiozawa area. (Miya, 174
Kunimune as well as two of his sons died in a series of epic battles against surrounding warlords. Economic achievement constituted another clear point of admiration. This was highlighted in accounts of the success of Bokushi’s grandfather and father in business, as we have already seen in Chapters One and Two. Their wives were also highly regarded for their support of the household economy. As for Bokushi’s self-praise, it largely rested on his economic achievements in land acquisition and in building a lavish house. The third point for which ancestors were praised is intelligence and cultural talent. This was as yet an unestablished value in comparison with the abovementioned areas of achievement, because there existed a general suspicion that devotion to the arts weakened the household economy. However, Bokushi’s texts are full of admiration for his father’s talent in *haikai* poetry and his general knowledge and intelligence, as well as for his mother’s love of books. Such praise was undoubtedly related to Bokushi’s personal inclination to the arts, and perhaps to his hope that his own achievement in this area would be regarded highly by future generations of the Suzukis.

Bokushi’s stories of his ancestors include accounts of misfortunes. There are two types of such negative events, towards which Bokushi’s attitude differs. The first is misfortunes that resulted from political, historical or personal accidents. The incidents in question brought dramatic losses to the family fortunes; however, Bokushi merely remarked that they were ‘a pity’, without resorting to any stronger language. One example is

*Bokushi no denki to chojutsu*, in Suzuki Bokushi kenshōkai (ed.), *Suzuki Bokushi shiryōshū*, Niigata: Niigataken kyōiku iinkai, 1961, p. 289.) However, the 5,000-*koku* fief is not mentioned in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ or other available documents. I cannot identify Miya’s source, ‘*kafu*’ of the Suzukis.
the suicide in 1607 of the Suzuki family’s third head, who was purged from the samurai corps of the Uesugi house after an internal dispute. Bokushi described this incident as a great pity because the Suzuki family lost its samurai status at that point. 14 Another family catastrophe was the sixth head’s death, soon followed by that of his wife. Both were in their twenties. As mentioned in Chapter Two, these deaths coincided with a cadastral survey by the bakufu in 1682, resulting in great loss of land by the Suzukis because family cultivation of the land could not be established. In recounting these misfortunes of his ancestors, Bokushi seems to have maintained his objectivity, expressing neither sympathy nor criticism of anyone.

Bokushi’s attitude is different in respect of the second type of unfortunate event, those that resulted from his ancestors’ misconduct. His writings contain some muted accusations, for instance, against foolish ancestors who caused economic crisis in the household. In both ‘Eisei kirokushū’ and ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi writes about problems between his great grandfather, Gihei, and grandfather, Giemon, to the effect that Gihei’s foolish profligacy and misconduct, which included gambling and drinking, had plunged the household into considerable trouble. Giemon had remonstrated with his father about such behaviour, Bokushi wrote, but this only made matters worse, for he was expelled from home by the angry father. Bokushi then stresses Giemon’s virtue in that despite being expelled, he continued to care for his troubled parents by placing rice quietly at night

in the house for more than two years.\footnote{Ibid., p. 16, and ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 474.} In comparison with Giemon’s virtue, Bokushi implied that Gihei’s behaviour was injudicious, though he avoided straightforward words of criticism.\footnote{Bokushi compares Gihei with the father of a legendary emperor, Shun, of ancient China. The nickname of Emperor Shun’s father, namely Kosō, was understood as a synonym for an injudicious person. See ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 474.}

More importantly, at this point in the recording of his family history, we see discrepancies in Bokushi’s comments on his great grandfather that can be understood as differences between formal discourse and private voice in two different texts. Criticism of Gihei’s misconduct appears only in the essay, ‘Yonabegusa’. The family chronicle, ‘Eisei kirokushū’, on the other hand, does not explain the reason for Giemon’s remonstration with Gihei, but merely states that ‘Giemon … failed to be in accord with his father’.\footnote{‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 16.} The father and the expelled son were eventually reconciled. In describing the reconciliation, ‘Eisei kirokushū’ merely states that ‘[Giemon] apologized to his father, after the intervention of’ a relative, whereas ‘Yonabegusa’ says that several people strongly expostulated with Gihei, in sympathy with Giemon and out of concern for the Suzukis’ future.

The reason for the differences between the two texts on this point seems to be that entries in this part of ‘Eisei kirokushū’ were more or less official statements, possibly copied from a family record or death register roll, while ‘Yonabegusa’ was more subjectively written by Bokushi as his autobiographical essay, and was possibly influenced by the oral history passed on to him by his father. The variation can also be considered in terms of the difference in textual genre between the conventional formal...
records of family history and the newly emerging private essays by commoners. Or in other words, here we see a gap between two perspectives: one household-centred and one based on the individual.

Another example of a discrepancy in description of ancestors between the formal record and semi-private accounts is found with reference to Imanari Ryoro’s father. The family trees of the Imanarlis state that this head of family was such ‘a sickly person’ that the family business badly declined,\(^\text{18}\) while in ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi described this person as terribly ‘foolish’ and having ‘no sense of business’.\(^\text{19}\) It is likely that Bokushi’s comment was based on statements by Ryoro, who had some level of feud with his father, according to Imanari family records.\(^\text{20}\) Or it might be Kono, Bokushi’s sister and Ryoro’s husband, whose view on the troublesome father led Bokushi to write this.

Even in the record of the relationship between Bokushi and his own father, we can detect occasional tension. Bokushi’s great respect for his father in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ and ‘Yonabegusa’ notwithstanding, at one point in ‘Isho’, he openly expresses criticism, disapproving of his father’s apparently lazy lifestyle after his retirement in his early fifties. In the same document, Bokushi also bitterly recalls violent action against him by his father, which resulted from disagreement on a certain domestic matter.\(^\text{21}\) As noted above, ‘Isho’ was more subjectively and less carefully written by Bokushi than ‘Eisei kirokushū’ and ‘Yonabegusa’. The discrepancies between the formal and the more casual discourses clearly reveal that the

\(^{18}\) ‘Imanarishi keizu’.

\(^{19}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 481.

\(^{20}\) ‘Imanarishi keizu’.

\(^{21}\) ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, pp. 900-01.
real relationships between parents and children in the Tokugawa period were more troublesome than is suggested in didactic family precepts based on the Confucian value of filial piety. We will see this more fully in the case of Bokushi and his son-in-law, Kan’emon, described below.

Meanwhile, Bokushi was also representative of writers of family histories in recording current affairs surrounding the family for future generations. As its title shows, ‘Eisei kirokushū’ was intended to be a ‘perpetual record’ of the activities of the Suzuki household, ‘whether happy, infuriating, sad or pleasant’. Bokushi clearly states in the Foreword that this record had been and should continue to be written to provide future members of the household with useful information about their ancestors’ lives. Without this kind of record, he writes, the descendants would only barely remember their ancestors’ names from the death register roll, and would soon forget other information, or never even know of the interesting stories and experiences of their ancestors. He thus presented his work as a model intended to be the beginning of a continuing Suzuki family chronicle. He instructed his successors on how to maintain this journal in everyday life, and urged other descendants to ‘read this book once a year’.

This chronicle by Bokushi is one example among many family documents produced by rural elite families to record various domestic matters for the reference of descendants. Such documents include agricultural diaries, annual event calendars, wedding and memorial service records, and various financial records of family events and asset-building, as

---

23 Ibid.
well as family diaries and chronicles. According to a study of Shinano Province, family chronicles of the rural elite came into existence from the mid-Tokugawa period, with the expansion of the rural elite’s interest in recording not only public matters but also private lives. This trend is generally confirmed in the Uonuma area as well, although the existence of some work produced in the seventeenth century suggests a longer history of provincial people’s effort to record family matters. Elite families in Uonuma produced diaries and chronicles, using various names in the titles such as ‘nendaiki’ (chronicle), ‘oboé’ (memorandum book), and ‘yorozu nichiyōroku’ (general daily record). One example similar to Bokushi’s ‘Eisei kiroku’ is ‘Sumiyoshi-ya mannenchō’ (The ten-thousand-year record of the Sumiyoshi-ya), written between 1789 and 1841 by a chiimji

---

24 A good example of an agricultural diary and annual event calendar is ‘Yasekamado’ (written from 1809 to 1822), by Tachikawa Kiemon, a village headman in Uonuma County. See Satō Tsumeo, Namikawa Kenji, Taguchi Katsuichirō and Matsunaga Yasuo (eds), Tsugaru nōsho Kakashi monogatari, Nōgyō kokoroe, Yasekamado, vol. 36 of Nihō nōsho zenshū (Nōsangyōson bunka kyōkai, 1994), pp. 149-368. Takahashi Satoshi lists many family documents of one rural elite family in Takahashi Satoshi, Kinsei sonraku seikatsu bunkashi josetsu: Kōzuke no kuni Haranogō mura no kenkyū (Miraisha, 1990), pp. 129-31.

25 Naganoken (ed.), Naganoken-shi tsūshihen, vol. 6 (Nagano: Naganoken-shi kankōkai, 1989), pp. 646-56. Walthall also says that ‘No family histories or diaries for rural entrepreneurs were created or preserved before the latter part of the Tokugawa period’ (‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth Century Japan’, p. 463).

26 An example close to Bokushi is the Satō family’s ‘Dai dai shōji oboegakichō’ (1672-89) in Seki Village, as discussed in Chapter One. Shiozawamachi (ed.), Shiozawachō-shi shiryōhen (hereafter SCS-S), vol. 1 (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawamachi, 2000), pp. 482-98. Another early case is memoirs by Enomoto Yazaemon (1625-86), a merchant in Kawagoe, Musashi Province: ‘San-sai yori no oboé’ (Recollections from when I was three years old), written in 1680-84 and ‘Yorozu no oboé’ (Recollections of everything), 1653-60. Enomoto Yazaemon (annotated by Ōno Mizuo), Enomoto Yazaemon oboegaki: kinsei shoki shōnin no kiroku (Heibonsha, 2001).

27 See, for example, SCS-S, vol. 2, esp. ‘Hanrei’, n. pg.
merchant in Horinouchi who was one of Bokushi’s local *haikai* friends. It is thus likely that Bokushi’s compilation of family matters in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ was part of a more general intellectual trend among members of the rural elite in this region.

However, in the case of the Suzuki family, the practice of recording domestic matters did not extend beyond Bokushi’s term of headship. In the extant texts, detailed entries by Bokushi end in 1828. After that, there are only short entries giving the profiles of family members over the next two generations, which were seemingly written by Bokushi’s grandson. In ‘Isho’, written in 1839, Bokushi complains that his successor, Kan’emon, has not only passively neglected his responsibility to update this family record, but has also explicitly refused to continue the practice as head.

The discontinuation of this family chronicle in itself undermines any belief in the firm establishment of a ‘household’-centred ideology that overwhelmed individuals’ actions. As we have seen, there was certainly a growing trend for members of the rural elite to compile household documents in the late Tokugawa period. Still, it is evident that personal choice helped to determine whether or not diaries and chronicles were produced or continued. The contrast between Bokushi’s keen participation in the making of a family history and Kan’emon’s refusal to engage in it highlights individual differences in actual practices under the same historical circumstances. As will be further discussed in later chapters, Bokushi was a really diligent writer, but Kan’emon was not. Perhaps the

---

great growth in the number of family documents in rural elite families does not necessarily indicate their establishment of a ‘household’-centred ideology. In part, I suggest, it was rather an intellectual fashion among literate individuals with privileged family backgrounds to write a form of family history, centering on their own lives as the authors and as current household heads. Recording family matters was doubtless an enjoyable task for Bokushi as well as other rural elite household heads with a liking for writing, a strong interest in their own lives and great pride in their own achievements.

**Marriage and the ‘Household’**

Marriage and marital life constitute one of the best arenas for observing how individuals reacted to the promotion of ‘household’-centred values. The evidence about marital practices embedded in Bokushi’s texts shows patterns typical of the rural elite’s methods of building family through marriages. However, as the above examination has shown with regard to producing family histories, we can also see a great deal of variety in individual actions relating to marriage in Bokushi’s writings.

Demographers have identified a high rate of marriage breakdown due to death or divorce, and frequent remarriage, in rural communities of Tokugawa Japan. Thomas Smith, for instance, has identified a rate of ‘incomplete first marriages’ (by his definition, marriages that did not last through the wife’s fecund years) of forty-seven percent in his demographic survey of one village between 1717 and 1830, which includes marriages ‘terminated by death’ at thirty-two percent of the total, and those ending in
‘divorce’ at seven percent. Bokushi’s records further reveal the reality of life in village communities, describing some types of situation that have otherwise hardly been recorded in demographic data, and illustrating the contexts of divorces as well as people’s reactions to them.

Bokushi’s own marital life was very lively, as is evident in the summary in Table 3.1. He married six times in his life. The first three marriages took place when he was in his twenties, and the latter three in his early fifties. The first two in both sets of marriages broke up within a short period, while the subsequent marriages — with his third wife, Uta, and sixth wife, Rita — lasted for a long time, until terminated by the death of his wife in one case and himself in the other. As for his children, Bokushi’s first wife, Mine, gave birth to their son Jōtarō, who died of tuberculosis at twenty-one years of age before he could take over the family business and headship. Bokushi’s second wife, Hono, bore their daughter, Kuwa, whose husband, Kan’emon, later succeeded to the headship of the Suzuki household. Bokushi’s fourth wife, Yū, gave birth to their son, Yahachi, though not until after her divorce from Bokushi. However, neither of his two long-term wives, Uta and Rita, bore a child.

---


31 Despite Jōtarō’s early death before succeeding to the family business and headship, ‘Eisei kirokushū’ acknowledges him as the eleventh head between Bokushi, the tenth head, and Kan’emon, the twelfth head. ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 42, 44-45, 98.
Table 3.1: Bokushi’s marriages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of marriage (year/month) (length) and Bokushi’s age</th>
<th>Wife’s name and age during marriage</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Reason for termination of marriage</th>
<th>Interval before next marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1792/urū 2 - 1794/summer (2.5 years) aged: 23-25</td>
<td>Mine 18-20</td>
<td>Jōtarō (son) 1793-1813</td>
<td>Divorce (parents’ intervention)</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795/4 – 1797/4 (2 years) aged: 26-28</td>
<td>Hono 22-24</td>
<td>Kuwa (daughter) 1796-1840</td>
<td>Hono’s desertion (with Kuwa)</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798/4 – 1821/9 (23.5 years) aged: 29-52</td>
<td>Uta 25-48</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Uta’s death (of dysentery?)</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822/urū 1 – 1822/5 (5 months) aged: 53</td>
<td>Yū 41</td>
<td>Yahachi (son) 1822-1894</td>
<td>Yū’s desertion (refuses to return from her natal home)</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823/2 – 1823/4 (2 months) aged: 54</td>
<td>Tori, age unknown</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Tori’s elopement with another man (?)</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823/6 – 1842/5 (19 years) aged: 54-73</td>
<td>Rita 31(?)-50(?)</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Bokushi’s death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As Walthall has pointed out, the Suzuki family marriages in Bokushi’s day seemingly confirm the rural elite’s practice of familial network-building through marriage.\(^32\) Ōtō explains more generally that by means of marriages and adoptions, wealthy rural families made alliances widely over their locality in the interest of economic development and social

status. Iwabuchi Ryōji also presents a good case study of such an alliance among rural elite families, where the families in question even produced a written agreement on multilateral cooperation and supervision of household administration. The practice of making such alliances through marriage was made possible, Ōtō writes, because the economic activities of these wealthy families extended far beyond the borders of their own villages, creating complex relationships involving finance, commerce and property. Ōtō assumes that alliance with other wealthy families was expected to benefit inter-village businesses as well as to reinforce family status, further discriminating elite families from ordinary peasants. The Suzukis seem to have been one such family. ‘Eisei kirokushū’ shows that there were four families with whom the Suzukis had exchanged brides or grooms more than once by the 1850s. These marriage relations started with the marriage of Bokushi’s elder sister, Kono, to Imanari Ryoro in Muikamachi.

The geographical spread of marriage relations in the Suzuki family, as well as the balance of family status and wealth, also support Ōtō’s version of elite marriage alliances. With two exceptions, the families who had marriage relations with the Suzukis did not reside in Shiozawa, if ‘Eisei kirokushū’ is the guide. However, most of the families involved were located in villages within a day-trip distance. They were nevertheless quite remarkably spread out: nine villages (or towns) provided partners for the

---

35 They were the Imanari family in Muikamachi, the Hayashi family in Seki, the Aoki family in Shiozawa, and the Miya family in Horinouchi.
marriages of Bokushi and his three sisters alone. As for family status, the four families which entered into repeated marriages with the Suzukis were of more or less the same rank. In terms of political status, they were not as high as village headmen but did belong to the elite class in their own villages. Economically too, these four families can be identified as wealthy farmer-merchants, as vigorous in business as the Suzukis or more so. It is also noteworthy that all the four families were sake-brewers, as were the Suzukis at the end of Bokushi’s life, as seen in Chapter Two.

Bokushi’s remarriages in his fifties, however, do not seem to conform to the same pattern of similarity in family status. The later remarriages were probably not considered to constitute proper ‘household-to-household’ matching, but rather were most likely viewed as a solution to the absence of a partner for Bokushi. Though he was not yet actually retired, Kan’emon and Kuwa were ready to succeed to the positions of household head (shujin) and main housewife (shufu). Thus it can be presumed that while Yū, Tori and Rita were recognized as Bokushi’s wives, they were not considered as the main housewives of the Suzuki household. The weaker position of these wives compared to the others might have contributed to some extent to the departures of Yū and Tori.

The primary aim of ‘household’-centred marriage was naturally to find a good ‘housewife’ for the household, rather than a good wife for the heir as an individual. Walthall stresses the importance of housewives in the management of rural elite households. As she shows, Bokushi’s own texts

provide some support for this interpretation. As summarized above, his first and second wives, Mine and Hono, were divorced from the Suzuki family within three years in each case, even though both wives gave birth to children, which was a very important expectation of young wives. The divorces occurred, it is said, because the wives ‘did not accord with the mind of [Bokushi’s] parents and relatives’.37 This statement confirms one classic principle of ‘household’-centred marriage: marriages were subject to intervention from parents and other relatives when they found the wife of the heir to be not beneficial for the household. ‘Eisei kirokushū’ gives us a clue to the perceived faults of these divorced wives. Bokushi described Mine as ‘not capable enough in anything’, and lacking in the ‘customs of the well-to-do’ (shinshōmochi), though he commented favourably on her personality as ‘warm-hearted’ and ‘innocent’.38 These comments suggest Mine’s inability to play the role of housewife in a wealthy farmer-merchant household. Her natal family was presumably quite wealthy; however, Mine had not been properly trained to act as a housewife of such a family as the Suzukis, perhaps because, Bokushi guessed, ‘she lost her own mother when she was little’.39 Here we can perceive a dilemma for Bokushi between the household’s interest and his personal affection. In the case of Hono, on the other hand, her personality may have been a stronger factor in the divorce.

Nineteenth Century Japan’, p. 474. Also see Bellah, Tokugawa Religion, p. 47.

37 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 469.
38 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 27.
39 Ibid.
than her capability in the family business. Bokushi states that ‘our personalities did not accord with each other’.\(^{40}\)

In stark contrast, Bokushi expresses great satisfaction with and gratitude towards his third wife, Uta. There were obvious reasons for such praise. Their marriage continued for twenty-three years until she died suddenly of a dysentery-like disease apparently transmitted from a neighbour.\(^{41}\) Her sudden death, after they had worked together for more than two decades, from their late twenties through to their forties, must have affected Bokushi’s memory of his time with Uta. Moreover, his humiliating failure in remarriages after Uta’s death, described below, probably reinforced his retrospective attachment to her.

Bokushi’s comments on Uta do provide us with an example of agreement between the interest of the ‘household’ and personal affection in a conjugal relationship, though we still see the relationship only from the man’s perspective. Bokushi’s satisfaction with Uta can be attributed to the following three reasons. The first was her good relationship with his parents and other relatives, in contrast with the situation with his first two wives.\(^ {42}\) The second was her aptitude for work, although Bokushi’s evaluation of her ability in this area was only ‘more than ordinary’ in comparison with his own self-admitted workaholic attitude towards the family business.\(^ {43}\) Thirdly, he had been happy with her in terms of the conjugal relationship. He proudly claimed that they had been renowned in their neighbourhood for

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 30.
\(^{41}\) See ibid., p. 78 and ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 925.
\(^{42}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 469.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 466.
their intimacy. Bokushi boasted that ‘we never had a quarrel, and people chorused that the Suzukis enjoyed perfect conjugal harmony’.\(^{44}\)

Taking into account Bokushi’s personality and everyday behaviour as recorded in his texts, we can presume that it was not easy for his wives to build and maintain peaceful relationships with this husband. For, as Takahashi Minoru rightly judges, Bokushi seems to have been a faultfinding man who tended to involve himself as a supervisor of all aspects of household matters, including women’s domestic work.\(^{45}\) Takahashi supposes that this kind of behaviour by Bokushi caused some difficulty in his relationships with his wives. Uta and Bokushi, however, seem to have been able to resolve any domestic tension without serious confrontation between them. In fact, Bokushi writes in ‘Yonabegusa’ that he often deferred to Uta’s opinion when she admonished him.\(^{46}\) Posthumous treatment of Uta by members of the family and wider community also indicates the perceived value of her role as the housewife of the Suzukis. Bokushi’s record shows that various tributes were paid to her memory. The family staged a fine funeral catering for more than 200 people, and made a generous memorial donation to the family temple. Messages of condolence included one from Aizu-han officials.\(^{47}\) Bokushi even compiled a collection of poems written by himself and his friends for the repose of Uta’s soul.\(^{48}\)

As seen above, Bokushi’s writings, particularly in ‘Yonabegusa’, confirm the ‘household’-centred nature of marriage. However, his notes of

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 467.
\(^{46}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 467.
\(^{47}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 78-79.
\(^{48}\) ‘Keisai Uta tsuizenshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 190-92.
marriage-related events in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ offer a more complicated picture of his marital life, thanks to Bokushi’s apparent willingness to record everything that happened to the Suzuki household in this family chronicle. On the subject of Bokushi’s marriages, his autobiographical essay ‘Yonabegusa’ seems relatively protective of both himself and the household. On the other hand, ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in this respect, contains a more objective, on-the-spot record, from which we receive a different view of Tokugawa-period marriage compared to that typically presented in other sources which rely on a Confucian perspective.

Accounts in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ feature, for instance, wives who ‘divorce’ rather than wives who ‘are divorced’. Except in Mine’s case, the divorces between Bokushi and his wives resulted from the wives leaving the household. First, when Bokushi was twenty-eight, Hono ‘left home’ (iede) for her natal family, thus ending her two-year marriage. She took with her their nine-month-old daughter, Kuwa. The two families agreed to the couple’s divorce immediately, but took eighteen months to reach an agreement under which Kuwa returned to the Suzukis.49

The second case was more dramatic. Yū, a forty-one-year-old widow, married into the Suzuki family, accompanied by her seven-year-old daughter from a previous marriage. It was only five months after Uta’s death. Four months later, she went back to her natal home ostensibly to attend a memorial service for an ancestor, and then refused to return. The deceived husband, Bokushi, receiving an apology from their matchmaker, was apparently so upset that he would not accept any of the intercessions

offered by various people. Later, Yū herself regretted her action and offered an apology, asking for permission to return to the Suzukis, but Bokushi ignored her.50 Two years after the divorce, Bokushi was totally surprised by the news that Yū had suddenly reappeared, bringing with her a boy whom she claimed to be Bokushi’s son. After a few days of negotiation, Bokushi and his then wife, Rita, received the boy into the Suzuki family.51

The departure of Tori, Bokushi’s fifth wife, can be understood as an elopement. Bokushi’s marriage to Tori, a widow whose age at the time is unknown, was quickly arranged by a relative, within eight months of the divorce from Yū.52 But Tori ran away from Bokushi along with a female servant of the Suzukis, just two months after her marriage. This appears to have been a great humiliation for Bokushi. He sent two men in the direction of Kōzuke Province in search of the escapees, as well as asking many friends and relatives for help. Tori was captured in a post-town thirteen kilometres away, and brought back to a mediator’s place. Entries about this incident in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ are not fully informative; still, Bokushi’s biographers, including Takahashi, believe that a lover of Tori’s, known as ‘the man of the Eiraku-ya in Koide[jima]’, was involved in this flight.53

These cases of marriage breakdown in Bokushi’s life relate to an ongoing debate about commoners’ divorce practices in the Tokugawa period. A central question for our purposes is to what extent the actions of Bokushi’s wives should be interpreted as the result of a clash between the household’s interest and the individual’s will. In contrast to the orthodox

50 Ibid., pp. 80-81.
51 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
52 Ibid., p. 83.
53 See Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, p. 184.
view that women were virtually powerless in decision and action in relation to divorce, revisionists such as Takagi Tadashi have argued that the majority of divorces was decided not by the despotic will of husbands, but by consent between the couple or, often, the two families.\textsuperscript{54} Takagi further argues that women in the commoner class, unlike their samurai counterparts, could exercise much more liberty in divorce than was previously thought. Accordingly, he reverses the usual interpretation of the well-known standard divorce statement (\textit{mikudarihan} or three-and-a-half-line statement) issued only by husbands: the document is more correctly understood, he maintains, as the former husband’s legal declaration that he will not interfere with his former wife’s remarriage in the future. The writing of a divorce statement by the husband was thus not an exercise of his rights, in this interpretation, but rather his obligation by law in the case of marriage breakdown: in some cases, the wife demanded it or refused to receive it; and sometimes the husband asked the wife for a receipt for it.\textsuperscript{55}

More recent studies, however, criticise Takagi’s view for overemphasizing commoner women’s rights and liberties in premodern marital life. Ōtō, for example, asserts that not only in the samurai class but also among commoners, there existed community customs that gave priority to the family of the husband over the wife or her family when problems occurred in a marriage. Possible actions by wives in divorce were in the end far more limited, in Ōtō’s view, than the actions that could be taken by the husband or his family. The flight of a wife from her husband back to her


\textsuperscript{55} See ibid., pp. 35, 37, 44, 48-49, 58.
natal home or into a temple should, he argues, be understood as the
woman’s desperate counter-action in light of that unequal situation.\(^{56}\)

It is probably right to be cautious in assessing commoner women’s
liberty in matters of divorce. In general, it was more difficult for women
than men to remain unmarried, because it was hard for them to achieve
economic independence, and because of socio-political discrimination in the
community. Among Bokushi’s wives, Yū’s regret after she ran away,
apparently during pregnancy, may be related to the disadvantage that she
was likely to suffer as a divorced woman. Her later action in bringing her
two-year-old boy to Bokushi seems like a desperate act after a period of
hardship.

At the same time, however, the frequency with which wives,
husbands and other members ran away from the household, as recorded in
‘Eisei kirokushū’, certainly encourages the conclusion that Tokugawa rural
communities to some extent tolerated people’s determination to leave.
Among Bokushi’s wives, in addition to Hono, Yū and Tori, the sixth wife,
Rita, also ‘secretly fled by night’ (hisoka ni yonige) in 1825. She returned
home three weeks later with the excuse that she had been having eye
treatment.\(^{57}\) As for husbands, Bokushi’s first son-in-law was an example.
After his son died in 1813, Bokushi and his relatives arranged a marriage
between his daughter, Kuwa, and Ryoro’s son, Yaehachi; the couple was
expected to succeed to the headship of the Suzukis in the future. But
Yaehachi fled from Shiozawa towards Edo, after living for only four months

\(^{56}\) Ōtō Osamu, ‘Fūfugenka, rikon to sonraku shakai’, in Watanabe Nobuo (ed.), Kinsei Nihon no seikatsu bunka to chiiki shakai (Kawade shobō
\(^{57}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 90.
with the Suzuki family. In addition, in 1825, Bokushi went to Tōkamachi in order to discuss the situation of a runaway husband for whom Bokushi had performed the role of matchmaker. The man had fled from his own home, leaving his wife behind.

More examples appear if we extend our scope beyond husbands and wives. A female servant of the Suzukis ran away together with Tori in 1823, followed by a male servant, who ran away to Edo in the following year. In 1826, another male servant stole some goods from the shop of the Suzuki-ya and ran away. Unfortunately there is no record available to tell us what happened to those who ran away from the Suzuki-ya or other households. Nonetheless, the fact that these cases are only the runaways recorded by Bokushi in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ between 1817 and 1828 suggests that leaving the household to which a person had once belonged was not extremely uncommon, and did not necessarily bring serious consequences.

Bokushi’s experience in marriage and divorce also suggests the need to reconsider people’s actual behaviour under the marriage laws of the Tokugawa period. The birth of Yū’s child after her divorce from Bokushi provides one interesting case. As Ishii Ryōsuke notes, it was stipulated in the 1742 bakufu legal codes, ‘Kujikata osadamegaki hyakkajō’ (The one hundred articles on determining legal matters), that divorced husbands were responsible for post-divorce births only when they were informed within

---

58 Ibid., p. 54.
59 Ibid., p. 90.
60 Ibid., pp. 83, 86.
61 Ibid., p. 91.
three months of the divorces. Given this rule, Bokushi was exempt from legal responsibility to accept the son. But people did, of course, feel social and moral obligations as well. Notwithstanding his probably anger against Yū, perhaps Bokushi, by then one of the most successful men economically and politically in the locality, decided to accept a more peaceful solution than the legally-granted action of refusing the child. Or more positively, receiving the child as his son might have seemed to Bokushi worthwhile in terms of securing the family succession or developing a family network in the future.

Tori’s desertion must have been a serious matter if it was truly an elopement with another man, since the 1742 legal codes stipulated that a married woman who committed adultery should be executed together with her partner in the illicit affair. The consequence of this incident is not recorded; however, it is almost certain that the problem was settled privately among the three parties, Bokushi, Tori’s natal family and the man’s family, with the assistance of their relatives. For this strife ended in the normal practice of returning the belongings of the divorced wife to her natal home. Bokushi even held a farewell dinner for Tori’s relative who came to collect her effects. This case seemingly corroborates Amy Stanley’s recent finding that there was a gap between the bakufu’s legal codes and commoners’ customary practice when adultery took place in a community.

64 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 84.
According to Stanley, the majority of cases of adultery in village communities did not reach the bakufu or han authority but were settled at the community level.\textsuperscript{65} Thus, it is probable that the incident involving Tori ended with formal letters of apology from her family and her lover’s family, with their respective village officials as witnesses. Or perhaps the fact that there are no further entries about this situation in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ may suggest that the case was treated as no more than that of a runaway wife, so that no formal settlement of an issue of adultery was necessary at all.

While the legal codes set by the political authority were almost certainly not invoked, however, ‘Yonabegusa’ records that community gossip did punish Bokushi in the aftermath of this embarrassing incident. He recalls: ‘in the talk around the town at that time I was totally scorned, and there must have been many people who ridiculed me’.\textsuperscript{66} These comments suggest that communal perception constituted another powerful code that could affect people’s actions.

Here it is worth considering how such sexual scandals as Tori’s elopement were seen in the rural community in relation to the growing norm of emphasis on the ‘household’. Kurachi Katsunao illustrates a change in popular ideas about sex, resulting from the establishment of the ‘household’ as a fundamental social unit in terms of both values and functions in Tokugawa society. He explains that sexual activities, which had once been seen as an expression of ‘unity between a man and a woman’, were gradually redefined as activities that should serve the ‘household’s

\textsuperscript{66} ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 469-70.
reproduction process’, while pleasure quarters developed the function of dealing with the sensual aspect of sexual activities – from men’s point of view at least, we should add. However, Kurachi continues, people still experienced conflicts and troubles in dealing with their sexual desire when it did not fit the norms of the ‘household’. Tori’s apparent elopement with another man just two months after marrying into the Suzuki family can be seen as one example of those troubles.

‘Eisei kirokushū’ also offers an account of an affair involving Bokushi’s niece, in a case that again shows how people reacted when individual desire in sexual activities clashed with social frameworks such as the ‘household’, community and legal system. Nobu, a daughter of Imanari Ryoro and Bokushi’s sister, Kono, married into a Shinto priest’s family, but became a widow at the age of twenty-four. In 1821, Bokushi heard a surprising secret from a relative to the effect that Nobu, then forty years old, had given birth to a baby boy due to an affair (mitsū) with a young priest of the shrine, who was legally her grandson (the real relationship is unknown; presumably he was a son-in-law of her son-in-law or the like). The infant was immediately taken away to a relative’s house because the families involved decided ‘this affair must not be leaked out to the community’ (seken). As ‘the situation was getting more difficult’, Nobu then ‘fled by night’ to the place where the infant was, and hid herself for some months. She eventually went back to her natal home by night after several people

68 This case of adultery is briefly mentioned in Walthall, ‘The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan’, p. 63. But Walthall’s essay does not acknowledge the relation between Bokushi and the adulteress.
interceded to convey her apology to her parents.\textsuperscript{69} We do not know what happened to Nobu, the infant or the young priest after that. This affair, which was legally incest, could have been judged as a crime that deserved punishment by ‘decapitation and display of the head’ (\textit{gokumon}), if the 1742 legal codes had been applied.\textsuperscript{70} But it can be presumed that the people involved in this incident managed to prevent news of the incident from reaching the political authority, at least formally, because Bokushi’s texts as well as other available sources remain silent on the matter afterwards.

Compared to women, it is true that men had more freedom in conducting extramarital affairs in the Tokugawa period. In the 1742 bakufu legal codes, men’s sexual affairs were not considered to be a crime if the female partner was unmarried and the head of her family was not affected by the affair.\textsuperscript{71} Nonetheless, men’s sexual activities were also considered secondary to the priority of maintaining the status quo of the ‘household’. One relevant incident was recorded in ‘Eisei kirokushū’. In 1811, Bokushi was involved in a relative’s family feud that had been caused by the household head’s decision to live together with his mistress in the main house. The community was probably somewhat tolerant of a rich man keeping a mistress, but living together within the family home was not acceptable. In this case the man’s wife and son left home: the wife was temporarily in the care of the district headman, and the son lived with the Suzuki family for half a year. Bokushi postponed a joint family event with

\textsuperscript{69} ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{70} Itō, ‘Kinsei dōtoku-shi no ichikōsatsu’, p. 238.
\textsuperscript{71} Stanley, ‘Adultery, Punishment, and Reconciliation in Tokugawa Japan’, p. 322. However, Stanley has also shown that this principle was not applicable in some daimyo domains (pp. 322-23).
this relative because of the man’s ‘reprehensible behaviour’ (*mimochi furachi*).  

A more common problem among wealthy families was men’s indulgence in the pleasure quarters, even in a rural area like Uonuma. Bokushi repeatedly writes in ‘Yonabegusa’ about the consequence of indulgence in pleasure quarters for the household economy and family life, telling his descendants to avoid such places.  

But later Bokushi was disappointed to realize that his grandson, at twenty years old, two years after his marriage, had pocketed money from the family shop and ‘rapidly spent as much as eight *ryō* on a courtesan’ (*gijo*).  

Bokushi’s repeated remarriages in his fifties probably seemed to people in the community to be somewhere between normal and aberrant behaviour in terms of sexual life. In ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi recorded that people had ridiculed him, saying ‘he is so sensual for his age’. This ridicule probably represented community reaction to his three remarriages within two years with women much younger than he was. People may also have sneered at the gap between Bokushi’s everyday image as a sober intellectual and the actual drama in his personal life. Bokushi, however, defended his actions in terms of household management, emphasizing the necessity of a wife because of her role in supporting the family business and social activities. He wrote that maintaining the security of the house and caring for the elderly, among whom he would soon be one, were important.

---

72 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 49.  
74 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 957.  
75 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 470.
jobs for his wife. He specifically contended that there had been no sensual factor in his remarriages.

Bokushi might have really needed a spouse as long as he wanted to be in charge of all the family business. Smith’s study, for instance, points to a significant link between marriage and household headship for male farmers. Walthall also suggests that every wife in wealthy farming families was expected to be ‘the helpmate of her husband’. As she notes, Bokushi himself had a strong belief that the husband and wife must ‘work together like the two wheels of a cart’. He was convinced that his parents and grandparents had worked in such a way for the good of the household. Presumably, he also thought that he and Uta had done the same for twenty-five years until her death. If so, we can understand how desperately he wanted to fix the broken ‘cart’. Unfortunately, however, neither Yū nor Tori was remotely able to meet Bokus hi’s expectations. He describes the two runaway wives as ‘cold-hearted as the devil’ (naishin nyo yasha).

As revealed above, the marital lives of Bokushi and the people around him were quite lively and often faced knotty problems. In the next section, I focus on disputes that arose between Bokushi and other family members, particularly his son-in-law, Kan’emon, as they attempted to direct their own lives while further strengthen the ‘household’ economically and

---

76 Ibid.
77 ‘Beppon Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 496.
78 Smith, Nakahara, pp. 90-91, 98-99.
80 Ibid., p. 58. This quotation is from ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 477.
81 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 469.
socially. I show that essentially, they sought to combine an emphasis on the ‘household’ with the pursuit of self-interest.

**Domestic Disputes**

The ‘household’ in the late Tokugawa period is often regarded as primarily a corporate body rather than a kinship unit. Like business enterprises and other types of human organization, the household was subject to conflict, disagreement and power struggles. The majority of known family documents, however, consist of a single voice, offering no perspectives other than that of the author, who was usually the head of the household. Bokushi’s ‘Yonabegusa’ and ‘Eisei kirokushū’ also fall into that category. His ‘Isho’, on the other hand, is a rare text in that it vividly depicts discord among household members, in this case, between Bokushi, the declining former head, and Kan’emon, his son-in-law and successor.

---


83 Another good example of a family document written by a member other than the household head to criticise the current situation of her family is ‘Mukashibanashi’ (Tales from the past) by Tadano Makuzu, a female intellectual. See Bettina Gramlich-Oka, Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825) (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 127-32. A famous poet, Kobayashi Issa, also produced a diary around 1801 describing his bad relationship with his stepmother and half-brother, which was caused by a dispute over an inheritance; however, his account is considered to have been much exaggerated for literary effect. See [Kobayashi] Issa, ‘Chichi no shūen nikki’, in [Kobayashi] Issa (annotated by Yaba Katsuyuki), Chichi no shūen nikki, Ora ga haru, hoka ippen (Iwanami shoten, 1992), pp. 7-110;
In the following discussion I examine the disagreements and disputes over household management between Bokushi and Kan’emon. I analyse the factors that complicated their disagreements, including personal differences in preferences and lifestyle, individual circumstances in age and health, generational conflict in relation to position in the family, and external conditions in the regional economy, legal system and community customs. In so doing, I argue that Bokushi’s ‘Isho’ is a showcase for the strong sense of individuality of members of the rural elite, even while they worked to entrench the concept of the ‘ie’.

I first outline the situation of the Suzuki household from the time of the marriage between Bokushi’s daughter, Kuwa, and Kan’emon in 1815, until Bokushi wrote ‘Isho’ in 1839. In 1813, Bokushi’s then only son, Jōtarō, died at twenty-one years of age, leaving his young wife and their three-year-old daughter. Having thus lost the heir, the Suzuki family quickly arranged the marriage of Bokushi’s daughter, Kuwa, to the Imanaris’ son, Yaehachi, but, as mentioned above, this marriage broke up in four months. Several months later, Bokushi and his wife, Uta, arranged Kuwa’s remarriage to Kan’emon, who was a relative of Uta.84

There seems to have been an element of caution and negotiation in relation to this marriage. Bokushi’s writings say that Kan’emon at first came over and stayed with the Suzukis as a visitor, not as a groom, until the two families decided to proceed with the wedding.85 Before the marriage,

---

84 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 52-56.
85 It seems that this kind of ‘trial’ period before formalization of marriage was not unusual. Some cases are seen, for example, in Narimatsu Saeko’s

---

the two parties negotiated about Kan’emon’s future status. According to ‘Isho’, the initial agreement at the point of engagement had been that the Suzukis would set up a branch household for Kan’emon and Kuwa; but just before the wedding, Kan’emon’s side imposed a condition that he should inherit the Suzuki household.\(^{86}\) The new condition was accepted, and the wedding was held in 1815, when Bokus hi, Uta, Kuwa and Kan’emon were forty-six, forty-one, twenty and eighteen years old respectively.

The Suzuki household continued to thrive after the issue of the household succession had been settled. By the 1830s, the Suzukis were a high-profile household in the locality economically, politically and culturally. Chapter Two has already outlined the household’s economic development. As we have seen, in 1830 at the age of sixty-one, Bokushi retired from the family business and handed over the headship to Kan’emon, who then more aggressively expanded into sake-brewing and large-scale moneylending. The family’s political status had begun to rise in 1820, when Bokushi was invited by Aizu-han officials to a dinner party at their Ojiya office, after tendering a fifty-ryō loan to the han government. Among eleven guests invited, he was the only person who was not yet a village headman or elder. Two years later, he was honoured with ‘toshiyori-kaku’ of Shiozawa Village, that is, elder with provisional status, and after a further two years of service in village administration he was promoted to the full status of elder.\(^{87}\) After Bokushi’s retirement, Kan’emon took over the status

---

\(^{86}\) ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 896.

\(^{87}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 73, 82, 87.
of village elder.\textsuperscript{88} The Suzukis also attracted attention in a cultural sense. Bokushi had been actively involved in local \textit{haikai} circles; his name had appeared in several publications including the writings of the popular authors Bakin, Ikku and Kyōzan; and from time to time, urban and provincial practitioners of the arts had visited the Suzuki family. These matters will be discussed fully in later chapters.

In such a thriving household, however, tension nevertheless grew between Bokushi and Kan’emon over household management. The fundamental causes of this tension were a complex blend of economic changes and individual differences in work habits and personality within the context of a generational power struggle between a father and his son-in-law. Their disagreement over business strategies, for example, exhibits different reactions to the changing economy, amongst other facets. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Bokushi’s intense devotion to the pawnbroking business was not continued by Kan’emon, who was pursuing more profitable lines of business.

It is probably correct to say that the Suzuki household, like other wealthy farmer-merchants of this time, stood at a crossroads in terms of economic growth. A study of the development of landlords in Echigo points to three distinct periods in the emergence of great landlords in this province: first, the 1750s-80s; second, the 1830s-50s; and third, the 1870s onwards.\textsuperscript{89} As we have seen in Chapter Two, the first period generally corresponds to the Suzukis’ foundation as rural merchants. Bokushi then faithfully

\textsuperscript{88} ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 959.
followed in his father’s footsteps in pawnbroking and the landlord business, achieving a great deal of success. However, given that the 1830s witnessed a new stage of landlord development in this region, Kan’emon’s disagreement with Bokushi’s passive policy seems understandable. The Tenpō era (1830-44) is known as a highly unstable time in terms of both economy and politics. Echigo Province was no exception; it experienced famine, riots, natural disasters and political reforms at this time.90 In an example close to Bokushi, Kyōzan cancelled his plan to travel around the Niigata area due to social unrest after he stayed with the Suzuki family and with their relatives in 1836.91 Bokushi’s description of the era, ‘times full of insecurity’ (yudan naranu jisetsu), well represents his concern about the economic and social situation of those days.92

Yet, such instability perhaps prompted the emergence of greater landlords as a result of financial problems among the population at large. Such a trend seems to have been visible enough at the time. People’s increasing interest in the emergence and growth of great landlords can be clearly seen in the publication of ‘chōja banzuke’, ranked lists of the rich, around this period. For example, Echigo no kuni mochimaru kagami (The rich in Echigo Province) (ca 1835) listed 431 households that were found to be distinctively wealthy in Echigo Province. The list does not include the Suzukis but does include the Imanaris in Muikamachi and the Miyas in Horinouchi, among Bokushi’s close friends.93 It is probable that while the

90 See, for example, ibid., pp. 17-148.
91 See ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, pp. 968-70, 972; HS-Iwanami, p. 166.
92 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 940.
economic environment at this time in history was challenging, it also provided opportunities for heads of growing households, especially if they were young and ambitious. The different views of Bokushi and Kan’emon at this point were certainly related to their ages and positions. It is no surprise that Bokushi, a retired businessman who had built up great assets, was more conservative than Kan’emon, his young successor.

In addition, Bokushi’s conservatism and uprightness in personality were key factors that always inclined him towards safer ways. ‘Yonabegusa’ contains many episodes that represent this aspect of his nature, including one that describes his very earnest study habits in his temple-school days, another that says he had never gambled since he lost some money in his late teenage days, and one that confessed in self-critical fashion his one and apparently only experience of visiting a brothel after being lured there by friends.94 Of course, all these stories were produced later to edify his descendants and justify his life-course. Nevertheless, Bokushi’s writing has given almost all biographers and critics the impression that he was a genuinely earnest man, often in a somewhat negative sense. A notable example is Ishikawa Jun’s comment that he was ‘dull and honest’ and ‘a very sober man by nature’.95

It is likely that such a personality exacerbated Bokushi’s real concern about the vulnerability of the household, although the expression of such concern was to an extent formulaic: similar sentiments were often expressed in didactic essays and family precepts of other wealthy

94 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 441-42, 446, 471.
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite in Tokugawa Japan

households in the Tokugawa period. Early examples of awareness of the vulnerability of wealthy households are seen in Sagawa Masachika’s *Shison kagami* (Handbook for descendants), published in 1667, and Nishikawa Joken’s *Chōnin bukuro* (Words for townsmen), published in 1719. Both refer to a popular saying, ‘there is no second generation in millionaire families’. Bokushi similarly states in ‘Yonabegusa’ that ‘very few households of farmers or commoners in this rural place continue to prosper for more than a hundred years’. And, like other authors of family precepts and didactic essays, he strongly emphasizes the importance both of abstaining from ‘ogori’ — extravagant behaviour and haughtiness — and of putting ‘frugality’ (*ken’yaku*) into everyday practice.

Bokushi also follows Confucian scholars in establishing a distinction between ‘frugality’ and ‘stinginess’ (*rinshoku*). However, in practice, his strict observance of ‘frugality’ in everyday housekeeping provoked tension between him and other family members. Bokushi was proud of his habit of not wasting anything, whether time or paper or pieces of rope. For


97 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 438.

98 Ibid., pp. 439, 451, 457, 467.


100 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 931. Bokushi’s reluctance to waste any piece of any material is very similar to an instruction given in a final testament (ca 1610) by Shimai Sōhitsu (1539?-1615), a wealthy merchant in Hakata. ‘Shimai Sōhitsu yuigonjō’, in Yamamoto (comp.), *Kakunshū*, pp. 239-40. For
example, ‘Isho’ records that Bokushi had collected all sorts of timber, including odds and ends, and put all of them in order. Kan’emon, however, split them for firewood. Nevertheless, Bokushi took some of them back, and used them to make many boxes, name-plates and the like. Even Bokushi’s last wife, Rita, sometimes could not stand his habits of this kind. She once threw away all the wooden sandals that Bokushi had repaired himself. Servants and peasants who worked for the Suzukis were, of course, sensitive to the difference between Bokushi and Kan’emon in the strictness of their ‘frugality’. After retirement Bokushi learnt, for example, that they praised the new head of the Suzukis for his ‘generous’ attitude in household economy.

Their differences in personal attributes, economic views and generation threw into sharp relief the two men’s different behaviour in daily life. Bokushi’s disapproval of Kan’emon’s everyday activities ranged from a perceived failure to exercise family discipline (Kan’emon was supposedly slipshod at greeting others, half-hearted in ancestor worship, and did not discipline children), to lifestyle (his late rising, and habits of having a nap and sitting at a kotatsu-heater), love of luxury (wearing good kimono, travelling on horseback or by palanquin, purchasing folding screens), bad housekeeping (leaving shelves, drawers and boxes untidy, or knives and tools rusty), and poor business habits (neglecting bookkeeping, careless

---


102 Ibid., in SBZ1, p. 933.
103 Ibid., p. 940.
handling of small monies). These shortcomings of Kan’emon suggested a list of dos and don’ts for the head of a household from Bokushi’s point of view. At the same time, Bokushi’s insistence on these points shows that ordinary people in their everyday lives were not always as disciplined as family precepts urged them to be.

Bokushi’s ‘Isho’ is an important text in showing actual scenes of domestic quarrels in the Tokugawa period. An incident in 1836 provides one example. According to Bokushi’s recollection, the quarrel started with an exchange of words between Bokushi and Kan’emon about work habits. When Kan’emon said ‘I am working!’, Bokushi answered sarcastically, ‘Yes, work is work however small or big, isn’t it?’ These words infuriated Kan’emon, who then went upstairs, abusing Bokushi violently. Kan’emon dragged Bokushi’s painting tools down from the retiree’s room, shouting, ‘From now on, I’ll be a retiree. You, be the head of the household. Do whatever you like!’. He also smacked his son’s head in a temper, telling him not to learn painting any more from Bokushi. Having seen his son-in-law raging so violently, Bokushi apologized repeatedly, but Kan’emon’s yelling did not stop until the head of their stem family came to intervene.

This domestic dispute developed further that night. According to Bokushi’s record, while having dinner, Kan’emon said, ‘I have decided to appeal to the Office (oyakusho) [of Aizu han]’. Bokushi did not reply, thinking it was just Kan’emon’s usual big talk. After midnight, however, the family realized that Kan’emon truly had gone out. Bokushi and other

104 Ibid., pp. 908-09, 917-19, 923-24, 956.
105 Ibid., pp. 916, 950-51.
members of the family searched for Kan’emon, ‘asking at house after house all over the town’. Bokushi describes that night search as a ‘once-in-a-lifetime humiliation’. Finally, Kan’emon returned home, accompanied by Bokushi’s nephew from the Imanari family. Bokushi ‘just coaxed [Kan’emon] into settling down’, according to ‘Isho’. This incident seems to have been a turning-point in the domestic feud between the father and son-in-law. Their antagonism towards each other intensified. Bokushi writes:

> I have been on good terms with my family, relatives and all other people throughout my entire life. Not to mention the fact that my parents and sisters all praised me until they died. But this [relationship with Kan’emon] is due to evil destiny from a previous life. It can’t be helped by human will.106

Thereafter, Kan’emon no longer hesitated to reject Bokushi’s advice on household matters. Bokushi angrily recorded Kan’emon’s words, such as, ‘My mind and yours are as different as black and white’, and, ‘When you appear and get involved in something, it always obstructs our family business’.107

This particular dispute highlights the complex correlations of social frameworks that surrounded the notion of the ‘household’ in Bokushi’s day. In my view, the main such contexts are the legal system, individual family members’ mental and physical state, domestic power relationships, and community norms and customs. I will discuss these in turn.

---

106 Ibid., p. 946.
107 Ibid., pp. 887, 889, 924.
Firstly, from a legal point of view, Bokushi was not necessarily in a weak position even after retirement. As noted in Ōtō’s study of parent-child disputes in the Tokugawa period, the Confucianist bakufu laws gave clear superiority to parents over their children. Parents could sue their children or renounce them; but a child’s lawsuit over a parent was itself a crime against filial piety. Only if a child had suffered through ‘injustice’ perpetrated by a parent was he or she allowed to submit a request for special consideration.  

Bokushi did not, of course, commit any ‘injustice’ in this sense. On the contrary, he had every reason to be respected by others because of his economic success and community contribution. Bokushi was also in a much stronger position than Kan’emon in terms of biological relation to the bloodline of the Suzuki family.

Despite this strong legal and social position, however, Bokushi did give in to Kan’emon. His surrender was probably related to his physical vulnerability due to ageing and illness. Bokushi had remained very active even after retirement; but in 1836, at the age of sixty-seven, he had had a stroke while entertaining Santō Kyōzan and his son, who had travelled from Edo. Narrowly escaping death, Bokushi entered a different phase of life because of this illness. He was left with a speech impediment, mild paralysis of one hand, and, later, partial blindness in one eye. 

These disabilities seemingly contributed to the worsening of the Bokushi-Kan’emon relationship, increasing their communication problems and their frustration with each other. The filial piety emphasized in various texts

---

108 Ōtō, Kinsei nōmin no ie, mura, kokka, p. 409.
109 See Bokushi’s letter to a literary friend on 1837/1/19. ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, pp. 971-73.
notwithstanding, elderly people with sickness or disabilities evidently did not always live happily under their children’s care.

Also related to Bokushi’s surrender is the domestic power relationship, in which his position was weakened by the death of Uta, his longstanding wife, and his subsequent unsuccessful remarriages to Yū and Tori. Moreover, although his last marriage, to Rita, lasted until Bokushi’s death, this young spouse — more than twenty years younger than Bokushi and just a few years older than Kan’emon and Kuwa — could hardly hold Uta’s position in terms of domestic power. For Kan’emon, Uta had been not only his mother-in-law but also his own relative, who had probably initiated the connection between him and the Suzukis in the first place.

Bokushi writes that ‘especially since Uta died, [Kan’emon] has treated me as a nuisance, and also has become foppish. … I have been the only one who bars his path’.110 By the same token, Bokushi himself might have seemed to Kan’emon a different person compared to earlier periods, a person who had troubled relationships with his subsequent wives and was more isolated from the community because of illness, as noted above.

Bokushi’s sense of vulnerability was also based on the possibility of forcible intervention by relatives or the community to remove a troublesome retiree. Ōtō’s study describes a few cases of this kind of intervention, showing that Tokugawa village communities had power, in effect, to retire trouble-making heads of families, or even to confine them to separate rooms or cottages. This was because, Ōtō explains, village communities often decided to give priority to the continuity of an individual household as a

corporate member of their village, even if it meant overriding the bakufu moral code emphasizing filial piety. In practice, interventions by village elders, relatives or neighbours in intergenerational disputes tended to be aimed at retiring the parents rather than advising parents to renounce sons or reject sons-in-law.¹¹¹

Bokushi’s ‘Isho’ gives voice to real fear of such community intervention in his disputes with his family. He writes, for example, that ‘I can now see [Kan’emon’s] intention to organize a meeting of the relatives in order to kick me out to a retiree’s cottage’.¹¹² He mentions in places the threat of being ‘kicked out’ (oidashi) or ‘turned out’ (tsukamidashi) by Kan’emon, or of becoming ‘a retiree in confinement’ (oshikome inkyo).¹¹³ Bokushi’s relatives elsewhere were also worried about the possibility of such a worsening of the confrontation between Bokushi and Kan’emon. They suggested to Bokushi that he should pre-empt such a fate by coming over to live with them instead.¹¹⁴ Bokushi, however, refused to move out of the house for the following reasons: first, he believed he had done nothing wrong; second, he was strongly attached to the house that he had built at the expense of a great deal of effort and money; and third, he could not stand the embarrassment of being removed from home, which would inevitably have attracted a good deal of public attention.¹¹⁵

Community perception was undoubtedly a very important influence on Bokushi’s mind and action. The domestic disputes of the Suzuki family

¹¹² ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 927.
¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 927.
¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 927, 930-31.
became a subject of gossip in the community after relatives became involved and neighbours heard violent shouting and children crying. Apparently Bokushi, rather than Kan’emon, felt deeply regretful about the spread of gossip, as he was then, on the one hand, very conscious of his fame as a man of high calibre in business and the arts, and probably, on the other hand, still worried about the ill-repute occasioned by his marriage breakdowns. In fact, he was even told by Kan’emon, ‘You’d better not do anything more because you have built your reputation as high as it can get’.\textsuperscript{116} In this respect, the possibility that Kan’emon would appeal to the Aizu-han administration must have been Bokushi’s greatest concern. It is actually questionable whether Kan’emon really intended a lawsuit or simply said so as an intimidating measure. But, in any case, the possibility of facing a lawsuit must have had a great impact on Bokushi, who generally was careful to respect the status quo. He was proud of having received a number of official commendations,\textsuperscript{117} and very conscious of never having been involved in lawsuits so far.\textsuperscript{118} For him, Kan’emon’s midnight disappearance after the quarrel, possibly to launch a lawsuit, was an incident that ‘overwhelmed [his] body and soul’ with concern about ‘losing face with the ruler’ (okami).\textsuperscript{119}

Despite his fear of further attention to this matter on the part of the community or, possibly, the political authority, Bokushi, in a sense, formalized the problem himself by writing about it. A few years before

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 892.
\textsuperscript{117} There exists in the Suzuki Bokushi Museum a collection of Bokushi’s certificates of commendation, which was compiled by Bokushi himself in his late years.
\textsuperscript{118} ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 916.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 904.
producing ‘Isho’, Bokushi wrote a letter criticising Kan’emon’s household management and treatment of Bokushi, pointing out ‘dozens of items amounting to fourteen or fifteen pages’. The letter was sent to the Imanari family while Kan’emon was staying there, and was addressed to Kan’emon as well as to the head of the Imanari family as a witness and mediator. Bokushi even required Kan’emon to answer in writing.120 Then Bokushi wrote ‘Isho’ as a last attempt to ameliorate the unpleasant relationship with Kan’emon. It was addressed to Kan’emon and three families of relatives, the Yoshino-ya (the Suzuki stem family), the Iwaki-ya (a branch family established by Bokushi’s granddaughter Suwa), and the Hirano-ya (the Aoki family into which Yahachi, Bokushi’s second son, married, succeeding to the headship). Bokushi stated that ‘Isho’ should be kept by the Yoshino-ya or Iwaki-ya, should never be lost, and should preferably be read once a year, but never be shown to other people.121 Kan’emon also, though to a far lesser extent, used the power of documents in attempts to settle the repeated confrontations. According to ‘Isho’, in a quarrel before Bokushi’s stroke, Kan’emon demanded and received Bokushi’s promise in writing that Bokushi would no longer interfere in the family business, which was now under Kan’emon’s headship.122

Such compiling of written materials as a means to settle domestic disputes can generally be regarded as a result of the spreading practice of documentation in Tokugawa society. Documents were exchanged not only between households but also now between family members, at least in this

120 Ibid., p. 956.
121 Ibid., pp. 960-61.
122 Ibid., p. 916.
case, with the aim of preventing future or further problems. It seems, however, that neither Bokushi’s letter of criticism nor his note of promise to Kan’emon was effective in solving the actual dispute in these instances.

‘Ishō’ was then written by Bokushi as a last resort in his troublesome communication with Kan’emon, with much resentment and feeling of resignation. Bokushi wrote that ‘there is no chance for me to fight against you in this world, but I hope this “Ishō” speaks to you clearly’. The text primarily embodies his desperate negotiation with the fact that his household was changing under his successor’s headship. Bokushi was then a sick old retiree full of resentment about the growing gap between what he wished to happen and the reality of life in his household. Dying in the same dignified manner in which his father had died was something that Bokushi dreamed of. He proudly recalls his final exchange of words with his father, who apparently said to Bokushi, ‘I had this son, therefore I have no regret in this world’. Bokushi obviously wished that Kan’emon and other family members would treat him as he had treated his own father, respecting him as an ancestor to be proud of, admiring his knowledge and talent in the arts, and appreciating the household wealth built under his headship. Yet, what the sick and old Bokushi detected from the behaviour and words of Kan’emon and other family members was only their propensity ‘to wish [Bokushi’s] early death’. Interwoven with accusations against Kan’emon, however, ‘Ishō’ also contains Bokushi’s final hopes for their reconciliation. For example, in the

123 Ibid., p. 889.  
124 Ibid., p. 901.  
125 Ibid., pp. 894, 899, 958.
middle of ‘Isho’ he wrote, ‘I should apologise that I have been picking up all the bad points of [Kan’emon] but not mentioning any good points’. Bokushi then wrote about Kan’emon’s courageous intervention in certain peasant meetings which otherwise might have developed into a riot, saying ‘I was really relieved and proud of you then. In heaven, I’ll be looking forward to seeing you serving the community even more’. The text also contains Bokushi’s instructions to Kan’emon and other descendants concerning the family business and housekeeping, various didactic passages intended as guidance to them, and an account of Bokushi’s own life history: he called this writing ‘zuihitsu’, literally meaning ‘writing as the brush goes’. Although Bokushi’s disputes with Kan’emon and his related experience were probably not very common among his fellow villagers, the range of material included in ‘Isho’ suggests that the document does represent to some extent a typical mentality of a former household head at the end of his life in the context of early nineteenth-century Japan.

* * * * * * *

The major significance of Bokushi’s family documents is twofold. First, these writings clearly exemplify the ‘household’ discourse that was spreading among farmer-merchants of the rural elite in the late Tokugawa period. This discourse centred on pride in the family lineage and established status in the community, the importance of continuing devotion to the family business with a focus on frugality and familial harmony, and the necessity of alertness to the possibility of any kind of change or threat in

\[126\] Ibid., p. 897.
\[127\] Ibid., p. 960.
the future. As previously emphasized by Walthall and others, the emergence of these family documents can be understood as a class reaction of the rural elite to transformation of the economic and social environment.\footnote{128 See Walthall, ‘The Family Ideology of the Rural Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth Century Japan’, esp. p. 466.}

At the same time, Bokushi’s family documents, especially ‘Isho’, bring to light the strong individuality of members of at least one household of the rural elite, which caused trouble in family life, notwithstanding the simultaneous emphasis on the orthodox discourse about the ‘household’. My examination above has shown that Bokushi’s values and lifestyle were not always accepted by other members of the household, and that people acted differently from each other due to their personal attributes and relationships with others, and to particular historical events. Bokushi’s texts demonstrate that individuals sometimes ran away from the household, and sometimes availed themselves of its power in their own interests. The meaning of ‘household’ to Bokushi was not the same as to other members. We cannot, therefore, see Bokushi’s texts as evidence of the establishment of one uncontested identity by the Suzuki household. ‘Isho’ in particular shows the existence of different views, and of emotional tension, among family members. In this respect, ‘Isho’ is a significant source for the study of early modern commoner families.

For Bokushi, at least, the ‘household’ was not necessarily something he had to sacrifice himself for, nor something that completely subjugated his personal desire. The ‘household’ to him can be understood as an arena within (or the ‘stage’ on) which he could craft his identity by playing out
certain roles given to him, namely, as heir, family head, husband, father and retiree of the Suzuki family. By interacting with the growing awareness of and discourse surrounding the ‘household’ among the rural elite at this time, Bokushi diligently constructed and performed his own persona. In other words, the ‘household’ was part of the context and conditions given to him, and manipulated by him, as he crafted his life in particular ways.

In the final analysis, however, Bokushi’s strong interest in both ‘household’ and ‘self’ was potentially paradoxical. His writing about his disputes with Kan’emon is overt evidence of this. For the sake of the ‘household’, it would have been better if Bokushi had just quietly played the role of retiree, as Kan’emon apparently suggested he should do, but this proved impossible in view of Bokushi’s large ego. His interest in recording everything surrounding his life was also paradoxical in that it revealed that the principles of ie ideology were often being flouted in his family. Such a record is, however, very valuable to historians.

So far we have examined Bokushi’s life in relation to the notions of ‘centre/periphery’, ‘commerce/farming’, and ‘household/individual’. The next chapter will locate Bokushi’s life in the context of the educational opportunities available in the countryside in the late Tokugawa period, analysing his experiences on the border between mainstream intellectuals and those with little or no education.
Education and cultural activities have typically played an important role in enabling some people to cross boundaries socially and geographically, in Japan as elsewhere. Priests like Nichiren (1222-82) and artists like Izumo no Okuni (ca 1573-?), the founder of kabuki, were classic examples from the past. The process through which Bokushi became a prominent member of the provincial cultural elite and the author (or co-author with Kyōzan) of *Hokuetsu seppu* can also be considered in this light. Bokushi continued to live as a farmer-merchant in his native rural town, but simultaneously developed his cultural world, in terms of knowledge, skills and human contact, well beyond conventional limits. His case well reflects the fact that social and economic development was widening the range of people’s activities, with the result that social frameworks became more fluid as the Tokugawa period went on.

The trajectory of Bokushi’s personal intellectual and artistic development illustrates the changing nature of the cultural environment surrounding the rural elite in the latter half of the Tokugawa period. As

---

1 It is believed that Nichiren was born in a small fishing village in Awa Province (present-day Chiba Prefecture) but came to establish one of the most powerful sects in Japanese Buddhism after his training in several major institutions including the Kōfukuji temple in Nara and the Enryakuji temple near Kyoto. Okuni is also considered to have grown up in an obscure family before the provocative dance performed by her company, ‘kabuki odori’, caused a sensation in Kyoto in 1603. See Itō Takashi et al. (eds), *Asahi Nihon rekishi jinbutsu jiten* (Asahi shinbunsha, 1994), pp. 136-37, 1,273.
current historians note, this is a time that was marked by considerable
cultural diffusion, particularly in terms of commoners’ education, the
reading of books and the development of popular culture.\(^2\) In Bokushi’s
specific time and place, an 1824 note by his brother-in-law, Imanari Ryoro,
offers good testimony as to what was happening to well-placed members of
the rural elite like himself and Bokushi.

We are townsman-farmers (chōka hyakushō); therefore,
reading books and learning arithmetic were basic requisites
[when we were children]. On top of that, I wanted to draw
pictures, play go and shōgi, sing utai-songs, recite jōruri-
drama, play shamisen-guitar, compose haikai-verses, read
military tales (gunsho), and study Confucianism.\(^3\)

Having identified himself with a new social category, ‘townsman-farmer’,
thus separating himself from ordinary villagers, Ryoro took for granted his
basic education in literacy and numeracy. His comment also indicates the
wide range of cultural activities available to ‘townsman-farmers’ by this
time. In such an environment, Bokushi also wrote that ‘It would be a pity if
we just lived and died without enjoying any forms of the arts’.\(^4\) Thus, the

\(^2\) Amongst many studies, see, for example, Richard Rubinger, \textit{Popular
Literacy in Early Modern Japan} (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press,
2007), chapters 3 and 4; Marius B. Jansen, \textit{The Making of Modern Japan}
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), chapter 6; Takeuchi
\(^3\) Imanari Bujian, ‘Bujian shizenshō’, in Niigataken (ed.), \textit{Niigataken-shi
\(^4\) ‘Beppon Yonabezusa’, in Miya Eiji, Inoue Keiryū and Takahashi Minoru
(comps), \textit{Suzuki Bokushi zenshū} (2 vols: hereafter SBZ1 and SBZ2), vol. 1
influx of new cultural stimuli in the provinces was steadily shaping a new lifestyle among the rural elite.

This chapter examines Bokushi’s engagement with cultural diffusion in the countryside in the early modern period. His experiences provide a good example of the ways in which one member of the rural elite took advantage of newly available opportunities and became a cultural leader, on top of his existing roles in business and community administration. I identify the cultural devices and historical context that enabled Bokushi to become a keen member of the provincial artistic community. I focus particular attention on the channels through which he became connected with knowledge emanating from the ‘centre’, namely, his own basic education, and later opportunities for exposure to intellectual and cultural stimuli, including meetings with visiting practitioners of the arts, his practice of reading, and his writing of haikai poetry and connection with other poets. I argue that in interacting with these new opportunities, Bokushi narrowed his cultural and psychological distance from the ‘centre’, gradually shifting from a receptive position at the periphery of information flow to a more active position at the centre of his own information webs. Overall, I show the process by which one ‘cultured provincial’ was produced, a process that blurred perceived, conventional cultural boundaries between literate elite and illiterate mass, between urban and rural societies.

The findings of this chapter also provide essential context for analysing the development of Bokushi’s communication network, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. The discussion in Chapters Four and Five will then facilitate an examination in the final chapter of *Hokuetsu*
seppu as a product of negotiation between a provincial literary figure, Bokushi, and urban writers and the urban publication industry.

**Bokushi’s Education**

Bokushi’s basic education was related both to longstanding means of stimulating literacy among members of the rural elite, and the particular social and cultural developments of his own day that further encouraged such people to pursue learning.

The heads of the Suzuki family had already been literate before Bokushi’s generation. ‘Eisei kirokushū’ first mentions ‘writing practice’ (tenarai) by Bokushi’s grandfather, Giemon, in 1707, when Giemon was eight. He learnt from the post-station master (toiya) of Shiozawa.\(^5\) As Richard Rubinger points out, village headmen and post-station officials were the first group of people among rural residents to develop literacy, which was necessary in order to carry out their duties.\(^6\) Giemon’s study under the master of the post-station suggests a social and political closeness between the Suzuki family and the village leadership group on the basis of their samurai lineages, although actually the Suzukis were financially struggling at that time, as explained in Chapter Two. Giemon’s study of writing can also be interpreted as a sign of the ‘spread of literacy beyond village officials’, in Rubinger’s terms.\(^7\) Bokushi’s father, Jōemon, was also highly literate, as we will see later. He was active in poetry and letter-writing, although ‘Eisei kirokushū’ does not mention how he received his

---

\(^5\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 16.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 30.
basic education. The family’s commercial activities from Giemon’s day onwards probably constituted another reason for the developing level of literacy and numeracy among family members.

With such a family background, Bokushi began receiving education at a temple near his house in 1777. His education seems to have been just as systematic as that typically provided for commoners at similar ‘terakoya’ (temple schools) or ‘tenarai-sho’ (writing schools) later in the Tokugawa period. ‘Eisei kirokushū’ records:

At the age of eight, [I] started attending a class for reading and writing (tenarai) taught by priest Kaiun at the Daiunji temple. [I] learnt Letters of Imagawa Ryōshun (Imagawa kojō), the Four Books (shisho) of the Confucian classics, Chinese classic prose (kobun), and The Anthology of Tang Poetry (Tōshisen) for over six years before finishing the class at the age of thirteen.8

This account, especially the fact that it concerns a year as early as 1777, challenges the existing understanding of terakoya education in rural areas, particularly in this region. As Brian Platt has noted, historians are currently reconsidering issues relating to the emergence of terakoya schools in the provinces, although they generally agree that it was from the 1830s onwards

8 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 42. As is well known, the Four Books (shisho) of the Confucian classics consist of Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, Analects and Mencius (in Japanese, Daigaku, Chūyō, Rongo and Mōshi, respectively).
that Tokugawa-period schooling for commoners proliferated. The established view is that only a small number of terakoya existed before 1750 and even up to the 1780s. Historians of Echigo Province believe that terakoya came into existence there only after 1800. Echigo Province in particular is also regarded by Rubinger as an underdeveloped province with few terakoya even at the end of the Tokugawa period. The account of Bokushi’s education challenges these assumptions; or at the very least, provides one notable exception.

Perhaps even more suggestive is the quantitative information in Bokushi’s texts about the terakoya he attended. Bokushi recalled that there were around forty pupils in his temple school, aged up to fourteen, and that his teacher had taught nearly 300 pupils by the time of his death in 1791. These figures are high for Shiozawa, a rural town of 242 households, even if numbers were somewhat exaggerated by Bokushi, or included some children from villages surrounding Shiozawa. If Kaiun’s teaching career spanned twenty years, the average annual intake of new students would be approximately 15 pupils, which is consistent with the assumption of a small number of terakoya.

---

11 Local historians who specialize on Echigo Province have only been able to trace the record of terakoya education in villages back to the Bunka-Bunsei eras (1804-30) or later. See, for example, Niigataken (ed.), *Niigata-ken tsūshihen* (hereafter NKS-T), vol. 5 (Niigata: Niigataken, 1988), pp. 544-62; Tōkamachishishi-hensan iinkai (ed.), *Tōkamachishishi-ten tsūshihen*, vol. 3 (Tōkamachi, Niigata: Tōkamachi shiyakusho, 1996), pp. 381-87; and Koidemachi kyōiku iinkai (ed.), *Koidemachi-ken tsūshihen*, vol. 1 (Koidemachi, Niigata: Koidemachi chōō, 1996), pp. 1,028-35.
14 ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 694-95.
pupils must have been fifteen. If so, it cannot be the case that Bokushi was exceptional in enjoying the opportunity of such an education.

The duration and intensity of Bokushi’s schooling also deserve attention. Bokushi noted that he attended the terakoya for six years, and that classes were held in both morning and afternoon, not only in the agricultural off-season but also in spring and summer, if not all year round.\(^\text{15}\) His education thus seems to have been more intense than the usual image of the terakoya education of the nineteenth century, according to which classes were held for only part of the day and part of the year.\(^\text{16}\)

It is very probable that this kind of educational opportunity was still limited to well-placed children in terms of social class and geographical location, and that not all Bokushi’s classmates necessarily received an education of the same intensity and duration as his. Yet, educational opportunities were certainly increasing in Bokushi’s day and in his area. His texts note that his uncle, the priest Zentei, discussed below, taught ‘many pupils’ at the hut he lived in after retirement in the Bunka era (1804-18).\(^\text{17}\) Even Bokushi himself sometimes gave basic tuition in reading and writing to two children of neighbours at his pawnshop from 1793 onwards.\(^\text{18}\) Furthermore, ‘Eisei kirokushū’ records that his younger sister, Taka, together with her niece, Imanari Nobu, attended a different temple school around 1788. Bokushi stressed that Taka and Nobu studied the Four Books of the Confucian classics and *The Anthology of Tang Poetry*, as he

\(^{15}\) See ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 441.

\(^{16}\) See, for example, Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, pp. 252-70.

\(^{17}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 480.

did, on top of their calligraphy tuition. His emphasis on this point certainly indicates that the girls’ study of the Confucian texts and Chinese poetry was still considered to be exceptional, confirming Rubinger’s statement that ‘Typically [women] did not study Confucian morality, ... but they did attain the skills to marry well and to conduct the business of their families’. Even if the experience of Taka and Nobu was exceptional, however, it did happen in that community as part of the cultural diffusion occurring in the provinces at this time.

Bokushi’s texts also contribute to the debate on what stimulated the development of literacy among commoners in the Tokugawa period. Aside from other reasons that historians have emphasized, ranging from popular ‘energy’ channelled into improving people’s life-chances culturally or economically, to feudal authorities’ goal of influencing people’s minds, Bokushi’s account of his terakoya days clearly shows that the joy of learning was a significant factor in driving pupils like him to learn reading and writing. He recollects:

Every day we were first asked to recite what we had learnt on the previous day. That would be three to four lines of a letter or a page of the textbook .... I never failed to read correctly because I revised thoroughly at home every evening. In case of a difficult text, ... I put a bookmark in where I had forgotten how to read a phrase, and then asked my father later. Even if he went out to a social occasion at night, I

---

20 Rubinger, Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan, p. 120.
21 See ibid., pp. 129-30.
waited for his return. If he was too late, I got up early next morning, … and went to his bedside to ask him how to read the characters.22

Probably each interested party — the samurai authority, village leaders, parents, teachers, and pupils — had its own reason or reasons for encouraging popular education. Bokushi’s comments here suggest an enjoyment of learning, together with a sense that education was a source of self-esteem in a young rural boy in a very supportive family environment. The picture of rural education in the Tokugawa period, particularly in Echigo Province, is not yet at all clear; however, Bokushi’s texts show that a quite systematic learning program, and a positive attitude towards basic education, had emerged in his environment by the late eighteenth century.

**Bokushi and His Local Intellectual Environment**

Priests played an essential role in education in rural areas, and not only in the temple schools. It can be said that local priests, and sometimes doctors too, worked as ‘knowledge distributors’ connecting the rural elite with ‘central channels’ of knowledge. It is also significant that the rural community in the Tokugawa period had the means to produce these ‘knowledge distributors’, by sending some children with academic ability to central Buddhist institutions to study. We can observe these processes through an examination of Bokushi’s involvement in a local intellectual circle centring on an old temple called Untōan, near Shiozawa.

22 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 441-42.
In 1785, when Bokushi was sixteen years old, he started learning Chinese poetry from a young monk called Kohan (1765-1824) at the Untōan temple. Bokushi’s advancement from basic education to the study of Chinese poetry around this age corresponds to the traditional curriculum for samurai, and probably indicates that Bokushi was now distinctly privileged among local children in terms of his education. Untōan was one of the most prestigious temples in the county, and, coincidentally with Bokushi’s intellectual development, the temple flourished greatly as a local intellectual centre led by a highly regarded head priest called Kaiun (1738-1827). (This is not the same person as the aforementioned priest Kaiun.) It is said that this Kaiun had studied in Edo in his youth after his initial training at local temples, including Untōan. He learnt from urban scholars such as Hattori Nankaku (1683-1759), and then worked in many temples in a number of provinces before returning to Untōan as the head priest in 1786. Kaiun’s talent in Chinese poetry was particularly highly regarded by literate people in the locality and beyond. His disciples even published a book of Kaiun’s Chinese poems in Edo in 1800. This fact alone suggests that Kaiun’s disciples, who numbered ‘more than a thousand’ according to the temple record, included many members of the local elite, whose financial support would have enabled such a publication.

Bokushi and his father evidently had a good relationship with Kaiun and other priests of Untōan. For example, some ‘bon voyage’ Chinese

---

24 See Imaizumi Takujirō, Hokuesu meiryū ihō (Bunken shuppan, 1977), pp. 76-78.
verses composed by Kaiun and three other priests of this temple appear in Bokushi’s travelogue of 1796.\textsuperscript{26} It is interesting to see that among these verses composed for Bokushi’s departure, priests and doctors contributed Chinese verses, whereas commoners composed \textit{haikai} verses. This seems to suggest there were two strata — high and low — of literary culture in the rural community. More importantly, the two strata were connected by educated commoners like Imanari Ryoro and Bokushi’s father, who were able to compose Chinese poems as well as \textit{haikai}.\textsuperscript{27} Bokushi himself also composed Chinese poems on various occasions throughout his life.\textsuperscript{28} Traditionally in the rural community, knowledge of the Chinese classics was seen as a proof of membership of the intelligentsia. Bokushi’s study of Chinese poems thus suggests that the circle of the intelligentsia was now open to some commoners. By joining a local intellectual circle led by priests and doctors, commoners could come closer to more ‘orthodox’ and prestigious knowledge in literature and the arts than \textit{haikai}. Local priests and doctors were thus an important channel for the intellectual development of such commoners.

Here it is also worth considering the nature of the social system in which local intellectual leaders like Kaiun were produced, notwithstanding the hereditary system of formal social status and occupation in Tokugawa Japan. The case of Kaiun, who was born into a farmer family as many

\textsuperscript{26} ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 772-73.
priests were, suggests that rural communities were equipped with a kind of bypass route through which talented children could become priests or doctors, and would then act as local intellectuals after some period of training in a large institution outside the locality, and often after some period of peregrination. Bokushi’s texts alone contain several other examples, including that of his uncle, Zentei. Zentei was born as the first son of a village leader (probably a headman); however, instead of succeeding to this hereditary position, Zentei entered a local temple because, according to Bokushi, ‘he had been eager to be a monk since just five years old’. After finishing his first apprenticeship in the local temple as well as some years of ascetic practices while travelling, he studied at the Daijō-ji temple near Kanazawa for three years. He then returned home and succeeded to the headship of a temple near Shiozawa. Also recorded are the cases of an uncle of Bokushi’s father who studied in Edo at Zōjō-ji, one of the shogun’s family temples, and Bokushi’s nephew, who also went to Edo for study after an apprenticeship at Untōan. Presumably such mechanisms for producing local intellectuals had long existed in the hierarchical networks of Buddhist temples in Japan.

In addition to priests, doctors were produced through a similar process before becoming leaders of local intellectual circles. A good example is Bokushi’s friend, Kuroda Genkaku (1778-1835). This case is particularly noteworthy in light of the influence of new social developments on the rural community. After studying at a temple school and then under

---

30 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 480.
31 Ibid.
32 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 16, 41, 55, 72.
local intellectuals including the priest Kaiun, Genkaku went to Edo in 1796 and entered the bakufu’s academy, Shōheikō, which had just changed its admission policy to accept students from families other than those of the shogun’s own vassals. Genkaku studied medicine, mathematics and Confucianism in Edo before returning home in 1803 to practise medicine among the local people. He taught basic literacy to local children at his own private school from 1818, while writing a number of books on both science and literature, some of which were printed at his own cost. In 1829, Genkaku even developed a plan to found a medical school in his home village, calling for donations from local leaders as well as requesting support from Hayashi Daigaku no kami, the head master at Shōheikō. Genkaku circulated his plan for founding a medical school, to be named ‘Igakkō’, asking for donations towards the cost of the school, which was estimated at 650 ryō. Although this ambitious project was not realized, his plan is significant as a sign of the active networking between ‘centre’ and ‘peripheries’ in the intellectual world of late Tokugawa Japan.

The process of producing local intellectual leaders with study experience outside their places of origin not only helped rural communities connect with ‘orthodox’ knowledge emanating from the ‘centre’, but also promoted actual contact between urban and rural intellectuals. An example appears in Genkaku’s travel diary in 1830. On the way back home from Edo, Genkaku was accompanied by his former classmates at Shōheikō, Ōtsuki Bankei (1801-78), a scholar in Dutch studies, and his brother Bansen.

34 See ibid., pp. 707-09, 748.
35 Ibid., pp. 777-84.
They were sons of Ōtsuki Gentaku (1757-1827), a famous figure in Western medicine in Edo. Gentaku had trained many doctors including Genkaku. Genkaku and his guests visited the Suzuki family because, through Genkaku, Bokushi had asked Bankei to write a ‘Foreword’ for the priest Kaiun’s book of Chinese poetry. From Bokushi’s point of view, Genkaku and Kaiun were honoured hometown intellectuals who acted as a bridge between the metropolis and their rural community. In 1818, Bokushi sent Bakin a copy of Kaiun’s book as well as one of Genkaku’s. Bakin replied that he was impressed by their scholarship, comparing them favourably with urban monks and doctors who ‘tend to be interested in worldly benefit and consequently not to study hard’. Bokushi also mentions Genkaku and his research on asbestos cloth (kakanfu) in *Hokuetsu seppu*.

**Meetings with Visiting Artists and Writers**

In terms of cultural stimulus emanating from ‘centres’ to ‘peripheries’, a significant role was also played by urban practitioners of the arts who travelled to the provinces. While traditional types of itinerant entertainers in music, dancing or story-telling continued to walk in groups from village to village, the new practitioners of the arts with whom we are concerned here were mainly urban-based, usually travelled alone, and stayed with local elite families as their guests. Their expertise included calligraphy (often linked with Confucian studies); painting in Chinese style or in *ukiyo-e* style; *haikai*

---

and kyōka poetry;\footnote{Kyōka, meaning ‘mad verses’, is a humorous and playful version of Japanese traditional verse, waka, composed in thirty-one syllables (five, seven, five, seven and seven). For an outline of kyōka work in the Tokugawa period, see, for example, Donald Keene, \textit{World within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era} (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), pp. 513-24, and Konishi Jin’ichi, \textit{Nihon bungei-shi}, vol. 5 (Kōdansha, 1992), pp. 76-82.} and popular story-writing. Many were multi-skilled. It can be said that whereas learning from priests was a traditional channel by which literate rural people progressed to acquire higher ‘orthodox’ knowledge, meetings with travelling literary and artistic figures were a relatively new medium by which they could connect to the central arena of contemporary culture, in the context of the cultural diffusion that was a characteristic feature of Japan from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards.

Bokushi’s first encounter with urban practitioners of the arts took place in 1783 when he was fourteen years of age. According to ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi, who had loved drawing and painting since he was a little boy, obtained permission from his parents to receive lessons from a painter called Kanō Baishō of Edo. This painter was staying temporarily at the house of the Muikamachi district headman. In order to receive tuition, Bokushi stayed with the Imanari family and learnt painting for some twenty days until the painter’s departure.\footnote{See ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 443, and ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 21.}

This is a quite early example of tuition in the visual arts given by an urban expert to a local art enthusiast in this province. Studies of the history of Echigo note that the province had previously been visited by haikai poets, who made an effort to expand the reach of their particular factions into the provinces as early as the 1720s. From the 1780s onwards, other types of
artists such as painters and calligraphers also travelled to provincial towns from Edo, Kyoto and other cities. As far as historians have so far ascertained, Bokushi’s teacher on this occasion, Baishō, was one of the very first in this category to come to Echigo. If this is the case, Bokushi was indeed fortunate to have had this chance to receive direct instruction from an Edo painter.

Opportunities to meet with professional artists like Baishō were not available to everyone, but were subject to people’s membership of the local elite group. By this time, leadership in cultural practice had been added to the expected roles of the local elite, on top of existing administrative duties on behalf of the community and for family businesses. The district headman who hosted Baishō was a keen haikai poet, and so were Bokushi’s father and his brother-in-law, Ryoro. It can thus be presumed that young Bokushi was able to receive tuition in painting because of the close relationships among these people in their social and cultural activities.

As well as membership of the local elite, family culture and personal attributes were key factors in enabling certain people to take advantage of this kind of opportunity. Allowing children to have painting lessons from an artist from Edo was different from providing them with basic education

---

40 See NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 792-99. Baishō was from one of the branch families of the Kanō-ha, the most famous faction of painters from the sixteenth century onwards. Including this visit, Baishō travelled to Echigo three times: in 1783, 1790 and 1794. See Tōkamachishi-shi hensan inkai (ed.), Tōkamachishi-shi tsūshihen, vol. 3, p. 439.


42 Haikai verses composed jointly by the headman, Endō Bakuro, and Bokushi’s father, Bokusui, are seen in, for example, ‘Shūgetsuan [Bokusui] hokkushū’, in SBZ2, p. 170.
or even letting them study Chinese poetry with local priests. The latter could be regarded as useful ‘study’ in terms of children’s prospects; yet, the first could hardly be justified in terms of business benefit in children’s later lives. In fact, the danger of becoming preoccupied with the arts had been a growing concern among commoners in their consideration of how to discipline themselves and their children in pursuit of successful management of their family businesses, as we have discussed in Chapter Two.

After learning painting from Baishō, Bokushi continued to meet with practitioners of the arts who travelled to Echigo Province. As Table 4.1 shows, from the 1810s, Bokushi himself hosted haikai masters, storywriters and painters including the famous Edo authors, Jippensha Ikku and Santō Kyōzan.
### Table 4.1: Literary and artistic figures who visited the Suzuki family or their relatives/friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Visitor</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Travelled from</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Imanari Ryoro (Muikamachi)</td>
<td>Miura Chora and Yasuda Isaibō</td>
<td><em>haikai</em></td>
<td>Ise and Mino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Endō family (Muikamachi)</td>
<td>Kanō Baishō</td>
<td><em>painting</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi learns painting for 20 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Shunjūan Kidō</td>
<td><em>haikai</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Inokuchi Mokei</td>
<td>Suzuki Fuyō</td>
<td><em>painting</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi proposes a joint project for <em>Hokuetsu seppu</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Jippensha Ikku</td>
<td><em>gesaku</em> fiction</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Ikku travels around Echigo gathering material for his <em>gesaku</em> fiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Jōmōsha Setsudō</td>
<td><em>haikai</em></td>
<td>Takasaki, Kōzuke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Teisai Hokuba</td>
<td><em>ukiyo-e</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Hokuba was a disciple of Katsushika Hokusai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Jippensha Ikku</td>
<td><em>gesaku</em> fiction</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826?</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Aono Takō</td>
<td><em>haikai</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Kiun and Sunchō</td>
<td><em>haikai</em></td>
<td>Hizen</td>
<td>Sunchō was a samurai from Ōmura han.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Kuroda Genkaku</td>
<td>Ōtsuki Bankei and Ōtsuki Bansen</td>
<td>medicine, Dutch studies</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Genkaku brought these two sons of Ōtsuki Gentaku, a scholar in Western medicine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Bokushi</td>
<td>Santō Kyōzan and Santō Kyōsui</td>
<td><em>gesaku</em> fiction, <em>painting</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Kyōzan brought with him the final proof of <em>Hokuetsu seppu</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from SBZ1, SBZ2; NKS-T, vol. 4 and SCS-S, vol. 1.
Chapter Four: Cultured Provincials

The desire to meet with travelling literary and artistic figures sprang from a mixture of interests. For provincial people, the meetings were opportunities, firstly, to have contact with someone, preferably famous, from the central arena of the arts; secondly, to receive instruction at the current metropolitan standard; and thirdly, to enhance their status in the community culturally and socially. By the same token, for the urban practitioners, such travels provided cultural opportunities to enhance their geographical knowledge and to obtain new artistic themes or material to write about or draw. At the same time, there were economic and worldly interests such as receiving cash income and pleasant hospitality, and the possibility of new patrons. Bokushi’s texts contain two examples of such interdependence between urban professionals and connoisseurs of the arts among the rural elite.

The first is Bokushi’s meeting with Jippensha Ikku in 1818. Ikku had been one of the best-selling writers in Edo since the first volume of his comic travel stories, *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* (On shank’s mare), had been published in 1802. Along with this series of books (which comprised eighteen volumes, and was finished in 1814), he wrote other stories based on his travel experiences in various places. His trip to Echigo and neighbouring provinces in 1818 produced an illustrated book of stories entitled *Kokkei tabigarasu* (A comical traveller) in 1820. According to this book, Ikku visited Bokushi in Shiozawa, having known Bokushi ‘for years

---

through correspondence’, and Bokushi took Ikku to a local mountain to see bear-hunting.44 Bokushi’s help and hospitality were certainly recompensed in the form of an anecdote about this ‘bear-hunting’ on the mountain, illustrated over six pages in the resulting publication. One of the illustrations is shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: An illustration in Kokkei tabigarasu, 1820**

![Image covered for copyright reason](image)

(The three characters here are, from left, a bear-hunter, Bokushi and Ikku.)

Source: Jippensha Ikku, *Kokkei tabigarasu shozen*, p. 79.

In the course of telling the story of this expedition and other experiences on the trip, Ikku mentions not only Bokushi but also many members of the local elite who offered accommodation and, probably, financial aid. Ikku seemed particularly good at establishing and maintaining this kind of ‘give-and-take’ relationship with provincial enthusiasts of literature. A letter from Bakin to Bokushi in 1818 enviously comments: ‘as

---

you said, Ikku is a really nice guy. Everyone likes him. He must receive a great amount of money at every farewell dinner on his trips.45

A trip by Kyōzan to Echigo in 1836 is another example in Bokushi’s writings showing the interdependence between urban professionals and provincial enthusiasts of literature and the arts. Apart from business related to the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu*, Kyōzan had his own interest in this province as a potential subject for his literary work as well as a source of income. In a letter to Bokushi in 1835, he began by frankly admitting:

The journeys of writers and painters are all fundamentally for money. They look at the scenery and appreciate its beauty only through the window of a coin. … There is no professional writer or painter in Edo who journeys over the countryside spending his own money.46

Kyōzan continued, explaining that his own forthcoming trip to Echigo was no exception to these money-oriented journeys to the countryside, though he was not as avaricious as poorer writers and painters on tour. He wrote that ‘it would be enough if I could earn ten **ryō** by selling my work’, asking Bokushi to ‘circulate the news of my visit among your friends in many places’.47 Extant letters written by Bokushi suggest that Bokushi worked hard in making various arrangements with his literary friends in Echigo for Kyōzan’s trip. For example, in a letter to a friend, Bokushi thanks him for his help in circulating the news of Kyōzan’s visit. The letter mentions nine

---

46 ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 324. The Japanese **zeni** coin had a hole at the centre.
people in five places who would meet and help Kyōzan.48 Bokushi himself accommodated Kyōzan and his son Kyōsui at his house for forty days or more until Bokushi suddenly suffered a stroke.49 In this case too, Bokushi’s hospitality as well as that of his relatives was rewarded in the form of literary appearance. Kyōzan wrote about his experience at Shiozawa with Bokushi as well as that at Ojiya with Bokushi’s relatives, in Hokuetsu seppu, Part Two, published in 1842.50

Books in the Provinces

As many researchers have established, the Tokugawa period witnessed the emergence of a mass of readers interdependently with the development of the publishing industry and of distribution networks for books.51 For members of the rural elite, reading was an important means of narrowing the gap in knowledge between them and the ‘centre’.

48 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 968.
49 As for the length of his stay with the Suzuki family, Kyōzan writes in Hokuetsu seppu that it was ‘some forty days’ (HS-Iwanami, p. 246; SCT, p. 236), while Bokushi writes ‘fifty-seven or fifty-eight days’ in one letter and ‘seventy to eighty days’ in another (‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, pp. 972, 976).
Chapter Four: Cultured Provincials

Bokushi’s texts suggest the proximity of at least some rural elite families to books. Children like Bokushi were accustomed to reading popular storybooks which were sold at very cheap prices even in rural towns like Shiozawa. At a social gathering in 1824, Bokushi and his friends talked about book prices past and present. When they were children (around 1780), they had apparently been able to buy a copy of a storybook for the very reasonable price of seven mon.\(^{52}\)

Young Bokushi was able to obtain even expensive books, probably because of the financial freedom and cultural values of his parents. ‘Yonabegusa’ mentions that Bokushi first ordered his own books when he was eleven, in 1780. Desperately wanting a set of picture books, he earned seven or eight mon a time giving massages to his parents. Bokushi had saved as much as 1,500 mon by the time his mother eventually asked his father to order the books for him.\(^{53}\) Probably this sum could buy one and a half hyō (118 litters) of rice in Shiozawa around this period.\(^{54}\) The parents also bought Bokushi ‘a number of beginner textbooks of Chinese poetry-writing from Edo’ when he started learning this art in 1785.\(^{55}\) The purchase of such books for a child cannot be explained without acknowledging the mixture of economic affluence and cultural appreciation that characterized Bokushi’s parents.

---

\(^{52}\) ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in SBZ2, p. 107. Here Bokushi used the term kibyōshi (yellow-covered storybooks), but, to be accurate, it must have been kurohon (black books) or aohon (blue books) for children, as kibyōshi were generally for adults. The price of a copy of kurohon or aohon was five to eight mon in Edo around 1750. See Suzuki Toshio, *Edo no hon’ya*, vol. 1 (Chūō kōronsha, 1980), pp. 130-35.

\(^{53}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 442.

\(^{54}\) See Appendix.

\(^{55}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 22.
In respect of the family culture of the Suzukis, Bokushi’s mother’s fondness for books was as significant as his father’s literary interests. Bokushi writes that his mother ‘particularly loved military tales (gundan) both of Japan and China’. She read them by herself if the texts included a phonetic guide in hiragana. For kanji-based texts, she often said to Bokushi at night, ‘Stop working for a while and read stories to me, instead’.56

Who conveyed the books to the provinces is another important question in respect of information flow to rural areas. Nagatomo Chiyoji’s studies demonstrate that itinerant book-lenders (kashihon’ya) played an important role in communicating various kinds of information about books to rural readers.57 Yet there is no direct evidence of Bokushi’s use of such itinerant book-lenders. Instead, two other ways in which he acquired books on specific occasions are mentioned in his writings and related material. The first was through a neighbouring merchant travelling between Shiozawa and Edo. Bokushi’s aforementioned book-order in 1780 was entrusted to a chijimi merchant of the Takada-ya, who was going to Edo on business. Bokushi describes the arrival of the book as the most joyful moment in his childhood.58 This is one example showing how provincial people were connected to ‘knowledge’ (in this case, in a published book) from the ‘centre’ through the regular flow of commodities and people.

Bokushi also acquired books through writers in Edo such as Bakin and Kyōzan. Of course, this could not have been normal for the majority of rural people, because it must have required a good relationship between

57 Nagatomo Chiyoji, Kinsei kashihon’ya no kenkyū (Tokyōdō shuppan, 1982), pp. 78-84, 87-105.
58 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 442.
those who requested and those who supplied books. Still, it is clear that ‘knowledge’ in the form of publications was transferred from the centre to peripheries through intellectuals’ personal connections, and, moreover, that at each end of the connection, intellectuals had personal networks to convey and receive information. An example appears in a letter from Bakin to Bokushi dated 1818/7/30. It is apparent from this letter that Bokushi had read two books written by Bakin with such interest that he had lent them around to his friends with a recommendation that they should read them. Bokushi was then asked by one of his friends to procure copies of those books for him from the author, Bakin. Bokushi therefore sent the friend’s request (for the books as well as a piece of Bakin’s autographed calligraphy) together with the sum of 0.375 ryō. Bakin replied in this letter that he had asked at bookshops that he patronized, but had not yet found copies; he promised to persevere on behalf of Bokushi and his friend, while emphasizing that he never normally responded to a request such as this.59

Historians have shown that many rural intellectuals were keen on collecting books, and made reciprocal use of each other’s libraries.60 Bokushi’s private library seems to have been well stocked, although neither his book collections nor his catalogues have survived. According to ‘Isho’, he collected as many as ‘several hundred books’, all recorded in his ‘library

catalogue’ (shoseki banzuke). An example of a catalogue number entered by Bokushi in a family document is shown in Figure 4.2 below. It reads: ‘miscellaneous: number 174 / owner: the Suzukis’.

Figure 4.2: A Suzuki household document containing a catalogue number entered by Bokushi

Photographed by author, December 1995, with kind approval from Suzuki Bokushi kinenkan, Shiozawa.

The range of Bokushi’s library collection is not clear but can be roughly estimated from his texts as follows: many books of haikai, children’s textbooks (he mentions Dōjikyō and Shōbai ōrai), Chinese poetry (such as Tōshisen), Confucian textbooks (such as the Five Classics), military tales (he mentions Taiheiki, Shinsho taikōki), literary essays (including Bakin’s Enseki zasshi, Nimaze no ki and Gendō hōgen) and illustrated storybooks (such as Ehon taikōki). An extant library catalogue of Bokushi’s neighbour, the Takada-ya, is also a useful clue because

61 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 915. In a different place, Bokushi refers to the book catalogue as ‘yūhonchō’ (ibid., p. 941).
62 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, pp. 897, 915, 941-42. It should be noted here that Hokuetsu seppu makes reference to a wide range of books; however, as I will fully discuss in Chapter Six, it is difficult to accept these as references to works actually contained in Bokushi’s collection. Thus I disregard them all here.
Bokushi may have had a similar range in his own collection, and he certainly would have borrowed some books from this neighbour and perhaps made copies for himself. The Takada-ya’s catalogue contains 171 titles of books which were published or copied in the Tokugawa period. It encompasses official documents elaborating the samurai code, medical reference works, household reference works, Japanese classics, travelogues, city guidebooks, maps and a record of peasant uprisings, in addition to those books already mentioned in Bokushi’s own collection.  

The custom of book-lending among rural intellectuals and of hand-copying of the borrowed books is also recorded in Bokushi’s texts. For example, in ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi included a copy of part of a Confucian moral essay which impressed him very much when he ‘read it at someone’s house’. The book had been published in Edo only the previous year. ‘Isho’ reveals that Bokushi often spent hours at night on ‘all kinds of note-taking and hand-copying of books’. He instructed his descendants to ‘take extra care of books borrowed from someone’. The rural elite had access not only to popular publications but also to some rare texts. For example, it is recorded in ‘Eisei kiroku’ that once when Bokushi stayed at a friend’s house, he was shown Shūko jisshū, an illustrated encyclopaedia of old

---

63 SCS-S, vol. 2, pp. 256-60.
64 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 487. The book, Gosō manpitsu, was written by Ōta Kinjō (1765-1825), a very popular Confucian scholar, and published in the second month of 1823. Bokushi finished writing ‘Yonabegusa’ in the seventh month of 1824. Bokushi saw Kinjō on his second trip to Edo in 1819, according to ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 907.
65 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 915.
artefacts, edited and produced as a private print by Matsudaira Sadanobu, a former bakufu councillor-in-chief.\footnote{‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 75.}

Thus we can infer that the community networks in Bokushi’s area among elite families stimulated reciprocal library development, as discussed in studies of other places by Kobayashi Fumio and Takabe Yoshiko.\footnote{Kobayashi, ‘Kinsei kōki ni okeru “zōsho no ie” no shakaiteki kinō ni tsuite’; Takabe, ‘Satō-ke no zōsho to jōhō’.
} Although there is no direct evidence in Bokushi’s texts, it is also clear that a study group was formed in the locality among members of the next generation after Bokushi’s. A landlord intellectual who ran a school, Seki Genbu (1821-84), organized a group called ‘shōō’ (book association) in the Shiozawa area, consisting of twenty-four members including Bokushi’s second son, Genzaemon (formerly Yahachi), and grandson, Eizaemon (formerly Ōkura). Genbu held a great collection of books, the catalogue of which lists 342 titles or 1,267 separate volumes.\footnote{SCS-S, vol. 1, pp. 730-33.} The function and purpose of this ‘book association’ are not clear, but its establishment suggests that members of the rural elite like Eizaemon (then the head of the Suzuki family) and Genzaemon (then the head of the Aoki family, into which he had married) were probably now linked through reading activities on top of their existing economic and political ties.

It is likely that the quantity and quality of a family’s book collection gradually became an indicator of cultural status among members of the elite class in the countryside, as was already the case among urban...
intellectuals. Since books for intellectual readers were very expensive in contrast with books intended for popular entertainment, a collection of learned books could be evaluated from the viewpoint of household wealth. This was probably one reason for Bokushi’s instructions to his descendants about maintaining the family library, including an injunction to update the book list (yūhonchō) and to expose all books to sunshine once a year (mushiboshi), a traditional conservation method to get rid of moisture and insects from books.

Bokushi’s home library and his expenditure on building it do not seem to have been exceptionally large among rural booklovers. For example, a landlord in a village near Shiozawa spent as much as ten ryō in 1825 on purchasing books, including a handbook of daimyo clans (bukan). On the other hand, however, maintaining a book collection could be problematic from the perspective of the household economy. Aside from personal enjoyment of their libraries, collectors must have faced a dilemma between the cultural status resulting from their possession of substantial numbers of books, and the economic status that depended upon their landholdings and acquisition of other assets. In particular, spending too much money on books unrelated to their business could provoke the community’s contempt rather than respect. Even more controversial was expenditure on publishing their own books. Bokushi was certainly one person who was...

69 On enthusiasm for book-collection among urban intellectuals, see, for example, Kornicki, The Book in Japan, pp. 388-90; and Okamura Keiji, Edo no zōshokatachi (Kōdansha, 1996). Famous collectors in Edo included Oyamada Tomokiyo (1783-1847) and Yashiro Hirokata (1758-1841), each of whose library held more than 50,000 volumes.
70 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 941.
faced with the dilemma between expenditure on cultural and on economic pursuits, as we will see in Chapter Six.

**Haikai Poetry in the Uonuma Region**

Cultural groups among rural commoners flourished in the late Tokugawa period, as has been noted by several writers, providing effective channels of information as well as outlets for cultural activity. Reading circles, which we have briefly observed above, were one kind. Others included *igo-shōgi* circles, *ikebana* circles, *waka* poetry circles, and *kokugaku* (national learning) circles. There is no doubt that amongst all of them, *haikai* poetry circles were the most vigorous in terms of geographic and demographic spread.

As was typical of rural literates, Bokushi joined a local *haikai* circle and soon became enthusiastic about leading its activities in his region and beyond. *Haikai* gave him great opportunities to engage with people within and beyond conventional community boundaries as well as to develop his literary skills. In terms of information flow, his energetic participation in rural *haikai* circles soon included playing an active role in dispatching information throughout his *haikai* poet networks. If he had not been an

---

active rural *haikai* poet, Bokushi’s communication skills and human contacts would never have grown as they did, and, thus, much of his literary work, including *Hokuetsu seppu*, would probably not have come into existence.

The span of Bokushi’s life virtually coincided with the period in which *haikai* became popular in his region, Uonuma County. In the metropolises and their suburbs, the popularization of *haikai* had begun by the end of the seventeenth century. A letter from Bashō to a fellow poet in 1692 offers evidence of the popularization of *haikai* in that period. Bashō categorized *haikai* meetings into three types: the first, and the ideal, was meetings of ‘pure’ and ‘real’ poets; the second was meetings among rich and cultured people; and the third was meetings among ordinary people who were only ‘keen to compete with each other in the grading system’ (*tentori*) assessed by *haikai* masters.73 *Haikai*-writing in Echigo also dates back as far as the middle of the seventeenth century, but the numbers and geographical spread of *haikai* enthusiasts had remained limited for several decades or more.74 It was in the 1760s-70s that *haikai* poetry first attracted Uonuma’s local literates, including Bokushi’s father, Jōemon (who used the pseudonym Bokusui), and his brother-in-law, Ryoro. As was the case in many other places, *haikai* was increasingly popular in this area for the rest of the Tokugawa period and beyond.75

---

75 See, for example, SCS-T, vol. 2, pp. 172-78; Tōkamachishishi hensan iinkai (ed.), *Tōkamachishishi-tsūshihen*, vol. 3, pp. 398-437; and Sudō
Under the strong influence of Jōemon and Ryoro, Bokushi started composing *haikai* in 1785, at the age of sixteen.\(^{76}\) It is interesting to see the coincidence of his coming-of-age ceremony, which gave him his adult name, Gisōji, and his commencement of *haikai* practice, which gave him his *haigō* (*haikai* pseudonym), Bokushi. This perhaps suggests that becoming a *haikai* poet was regarded as a kind of cultural initiation among a certain group of people in this locality at that time. Following forerunners such as Jōemon and Ryoro, Bokushi had become a young leader in the *haikai* circle in Shiozawa by 1800. His *haikai* verse appeared in print for the first time in a book that Ryoro edited and published in 1793.\(^{77}\) Bokushi then organized two *haikai* contests, in 1797 and 1800, as we will see below. Bokushi’s involvement in local *haikai* circles continued until the last years of his life.

Local people’s excitement at this newly available form of culture is clearly indicated by the existence of many *haigaku*, framed boards of *haikai* verses, usually verses which had been commended in contests, that were dedicated to and displayed in temples or shrines (see Figure 4.3). *Haigaku* boards in provinces offer significant evidence of the diffusion of the arts in rural areas in the Tokugawa period. For instance, in the area of present-day Tōkamachi City, historians have identified sixty-seven examples of Tokugawa-period *haigaku* still existing in local shrines and temples, the oldest of which is dated 1764.\(^{78}\)

---

\(^{76}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 22.
Figure 4.3: A *haigaku* in Uonuma

*Haigaku* at Hachiman Shrine, Tsumari Mizusawa Ward, Tōkamachi City. This *haigaku*, dated 1835, notes that a particular contest attracted ‘over 3,200 verses’ and that ‘seventy selected verses’ are displayed here. Photographed by author, October 2000.

One *haigaku* that is particularly relevant to my discussion was dedicated to a small shrine near Shiozawa in 1769. Notwithstanding its obscure location and the earliness of its appearance for this region, this *haigaku* displays the names and verses of fifty-four local poets, including at least one female poet, as well as some from other provinces. More importantly, in the ‘prayer-words’ (*ganmon*) on this *haigaku*, which expressed the wish that their *haikai* activities would prosper, we can see the poets’ clear awareness of their participation in a cultural movement that stretched across Japan. The text states that ‘many forms of the arts are now flourishing and are practised in every corner of our country, even in the land of Ezo or islands of Chishima’.\(^7^9\) These words encapsulate local poets’

\(^7^9\) Ibid., p. 403.
appreciation of the cultural and historical significance of their own efforts. It is clear that their *haikai* activities were considered by these poets to be part of a great cultural diffusion which they saw as growing to involve more and more people in more and more provinces. Also noteworthy is the geographical consciousness apparent in this sentence with regard to Japan’s northern periphery. Politically, Ezo (present-day Hokkaidō) did not begin to be formally incorporated into the Tokugawa order until 1799 or even later, with the exception of Matsumae, the domain located at the southern tip of the island.80 However, not only Ezo but also Chishima (the Kurile Islands) were already perceived to be included in the expanding cultural sphere of Japan in the discourse among amateur *haikai* poets in Uonuma villages in the 1760s, even allowing for the possibility of rhetorical exaggeration in this case.

Uonuma villagers’ participation in *haikai*-writing from the late eighteenth century is particularly significant in terms of its contribution to the connecting of this rural community to the outside world. Firstly, in terms of cultural history, this must have been the first way in which literate local people responded to movements in the central arena of literature. Their participation in *haikai* was particularly related to what literary historians call the ‘Tenmei-era movement in *haikai*’, a new wave featuring a revival of Bashō-style poetry, which had begun in Kyoto, Edo and Nagoya from the 1750s onwards.81 Bokushi’s own *haikai*-writing was directly and

81 NKS-T, vol. 4, pp. 819-20. For Tenmei-era *haikai* and the revival of Bashō-style poetry see, for example, Fujita Shin’ichi, ‘Haikai no kakushin’,
indirectly connected to the Tenmei-era movement. In 1778, Ryoro became a disciple of Miura Chora (1729-80), one of the leading poets of this movement.  

Jōemon had contact with another leader, Ōshima Ryōta (1718-87). Bokushi himself met Takakuwa Rankō (1726-98), another important figure in the movement, in Kyoto in 1796. Three judges in Bokushi’s haikai contests in 1797 and 1800, which will be discussed below, were successors of prominent leaders of this campaign.

A second reason for the significance of haikai-writing in Uonuma is that it encouraged people to meet and network with each other, both within and beyond conventional social boundaries. The relation between haikai and people’s network-building has been stressed by scholars such as Sugi Hitoshi, and more recently and most strongly, by Eiko Ikegami, who specifically refers to haikai as ‘network poetry’. The focus of their studies is on the nature of haikai-writing as ‘popular linked verses’. Deriving from renga (linked verses) in the medieval period, haikai were originally meant to be composed ad-lib and interactively among poets at a social meeting (za, lit. ‘seats’). In comparison with renga, haikai had much simpler rules, more playfulness in composition and required far less knowledge of classical


82 NKS-T, vol. 4, p. 820.
84 ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 770.
85 See Table 4.2. Setchūan Kanrai, Bashōdō Sōkyū and Shunjūan Kidō were successors of Oshima Ryōta, Takakuwa Rankō and Kaya Shirao (1738-91) respectively.
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

poetry. Thus haikai-writing attracted a much wider and less privileged population, as basic literacy spread during the Tokugawa period. At traditional haikai parties, several participants jointly composed a set of verses (thirty-six, one hundred or, occasionally, one thousand verses) led by a party master.87

Bokushi’s texts establish that such traditional haikai meetings did take place in Uonuma in his lifetime. He recalled his father’s active participation in two such parties in 1784. Both occasions were apparently significant events in the locality: each party produced one thousand verses and was attended by a guest haikai master from Tōkamachi and twenty to thirty poets from the Shiozawa and Muikamachi areas. According to Bokushi, the events began at dawn and finished at midnight. He proudly wrote that his father had been recognized as the best poet at these events because Jōemon had produced 180 or so of the 1,000 verses on both occasions.88

Through these activities and others, rural amateur poets formed their own associations, called ‘ren’ (groups) or ‘sha’ (associations),89 as were the

89 For example, Bokushi uses the terms ‘ren’ and ‘sha’ in ‘tōren’ (our group) and ‘Muikabō shachi’ (members of Muikamachi haikai association). ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 679. According to Sudō, the activities of local haikai associations in this region date back to the 1790s or before, and became very vigorous in the 1830s. Sudō, Tsumari haikai to haijintachi, p. 35.
groups already formed by urban poets.\textsuperscript{90} These rural associations organized *haikai* parties to produce a certain set of verses, and sometimes even asked prominent urban *haikai* masters to assess the verses and advise on improvement. A 1774 record of the activities of some Shiozawa poets provides an early example of such connection between a rural association and an urban teacher in the *haikai* world. This group consisted of seven poets: Bokusui (Jōemon), priest Kaiun (Bokushi’s *terakoya* teacher), the master (*toiya*) of Shiozawa post-station, a doctor from a neighbouring village, and three other members of the Shiozawa elite. They produced a set of *kasen* (thirty-six verses) and another set of *hyakuin* (one hundred verses), and sent their work to an Edo teacher, Ōshima Ryōta. The teacher gave a mark to each verse, and then produced a summary assessment of the work, which indicates the number of verses a member contributed, his marks in total, his mean score, and his place in the group. Bokusui, an early-career poet then, was placed fifth of the seven poets in the *kasen* for his five of the thirty-six verses, with a mean score of two out of ten, and sixth in the *hyakuin* for his thirteen of the one-hundred verses, with a mean score of 3.62. The highest mean scores were 4.2 for the master of Shiozawa post-station in the *kasen*, and 4.89 for priest Kaiun in the *hyakuin*.\textsuperscript{91} Evidently a mechanism had been developed by this time in which rural amateur poets could receive an evaluation of their poems in a standard format from famous urban *haikai* masters.


\textsuperscript{91} See SCS-S, vol. 1, pp. 768-73.
Haikai also gave at least some rural people a chance to establish a conceptual connection to literary authorities in the form of master-disciple links. For example, a surviving certificate of haikai-learning (‘haikai tsukurikata ōgi denju’) links Uonuma poets, including Bokushi’s father, in a family-tree-like succession deriving from Bashō. According to the document, Bashō in Edo gave a certificate to his immediate disciple Morikawa Kyoriku (1656-1715, based in Edo and then Hikone) in 1693. Kyoriku did the same in 1709 for his disciple, Unrei, who travelled around a number of provinces, including Echigo and Sado. After a local poet, Sanshi, received a certificate from Unrei, the master-disciple lineage developed in the Shiozawa area as follows: certificates were issued by Sanshi to Eibi in 1749, by Eibi to Bokusui (Jōemon) in 1771, by Bokusui to Chikusen in 1782, by Chikusen to Ichiei in 1791, and by Ichiei to Richiku, a good friend of Bokushi’s, in 1799.92 It is likely that Bokushi received a certificate from Bokusui or another poet in this lineage, although no certificate for Bokushi has yet been found. This is a significant feature of haikai: not only did it help to produce rural haikai practitioners, but it also contributed to people’s cultural networks. These local master-disciple relationships certainly helped haikai practitioners connect with each other at the individual level as well as at village and even regional levels.

Rural people’s enthusiasm for haikai was probably also related to their consciousness that they were engaging in a contemporary social movement that represented something of the mood of the times. In other words, their enthusiasm was probably fuelled by a simple desire to involve

themselves in fashionable cultural activities. *Haikai* fitted in well with people’s desire for learning in this period. To those who had received training in reading and writing, *haikai* offered a relatively easy but worthwhile chance to produce their own literary work, however much its format might be guided by rules or textbooks. Even for those who were not yet literate, ability to compose *haikai* could be a goal to aim for. In other words, participation in *haikai* might be considered as a kind of proof of or an application for membership of the ‘culture club’ in a particular provincial area. Such an appreciation of *haikai* activities is evident in the following words of Bokushi around 1830.

> As we were born in the heyday of our nation, we can enjoy *haikai* even in our plain, humble language. With all the excitement and joy among members of *haikai* associations, *haikai* contests are always held in our locality.\(^93\)

For participants in *haikai* contests, the framed *haigaku* display in a local shrine or temple was just like an honour board proving their cultural status. In that sense, in *haikai* contests at least, the shrines and temples had more importance as community galleries than as religious entities. According to Suzuki Katsutada, this kind of contest had begun using temples and shrines in the cities in the early eighteenth century. Later, in the cities, even public baths and restaurants came to be used as display spaces, in addition to shrines and temples.\(^94\) In the countryside in Bokushi’s day, the tendency to use other venues might have been weaker than in the

---

\(^93\) ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 663.

cities; however, Bokushi’s texts do suggest one case in which winning verses of a haikai contest were displayed at someone’s house. More importantly, such community-based cultural events as these were now potentially connected to the ‘cultural centre’ through the judging of contests by outside experts and the publication of selected works, as we will see below.

**Bokushi’s Haikai Contests**

As several studies have already suggested, the haikai contests organized by Bokushi in 1797 and 1800 provide evidence of the cultural maturity of the rural community in the late Tokugawa period, in terms of rural people’s enthusiasm for participating in cultural activities, and their leaders’ capacity to organize events in association with a large cultural network. The 1797 contest was dedicated to a shrine near Bokushi’s house. Two haikai masters, in Edo and Nagoya, judged this contest, which attracted entries totalling 2,907 verses. Subsequently, Bokushi organized a larger contest, in 1800, securing ten professional judges, in Kyoto, Osaka, Edo and other cities. It resulted in 4,102 verses being submitted, and a book of selected verses was even printed in Kyoto in 1802.

---

95 ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 663.
96 See, for example, Nishiyama Matsunosuke, ‘Kinsei bunka-shi kenkyū ni kansuru shiron: chihō-shi tono kanren ni oite’, in Nishiyama Matsunosuke, Kinsei bunka no kenkyū, vol. 4 of Nishiyama Matsunosuke chosakushū (Yosikawa kōbukan, 1983), pp. 198-200 (original article published in 1959); Sugi, Kinsei no chiiki to zaison bunka, pp. 36-41, 48-52; Ikegami, Bonds of Civility, pp. 208-09.
97 See ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 31, 33-34; ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 473 (here, in fact, Bokushi recorded wrongly that the second contest had been held in 1802). The publication resulting from the 1800 contest is reproduced as Inokuchi Mokei and Suzuki Bokushi (eds), ‘Jippyō
I examine here the mechanisms that made the *haikai* contests possible, and assess their significance, particularly in the case of the 1800 competition, in terms of providing evidence about the extent of rural poets’ cultural networks. Firstly, I explain the procedure of the 1800 contest according to Bokushi’s texts. The details of the contest can be summarized as follows:

**Table 4.2: Bokushi’s *haikai* contest in 1800**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedicated</th>
<th>Fukōji temple, Urasa Village (eighteen kilometres from Shiozawa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style and theme of poetry</strong></td>
<td><em>Hokku</em> (the first stanza as an independent verse with a set of 5-7-5 syllables) on the theme of one of the four seasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entries</td>
<td>4,102 verses (the target number of entries was 3,000) (The number of participants is unknown.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges (places of residence)</td>
<td>Bashōdō Sōkyū (Kyoto), Ichimuan Jōsa (Kyoto), Hassenbō Dagaku (Osaka), Fujian Tōkyō (Osaka), Shunjūn Kidō (Edo), Senchōan Toshun (Edo), Shōroan Umei (Edo), Baigetsuan Hasoku (Ise), Gichūji Jūkō (Ōmi), Hōshibō Hakuwa (Sanuki) (Note: This is a final list of the judges. The advertising flyer had different poets in the places of Kidō, Toshun and Dagaku.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizers</td>
<td>Chief organizer (<em>ganshu</em>): Inokuchi Mokei Administrator (<em>toritsugi</em>): Suzuki Bokushi (Three poets other than Mokei and Bokushi are also listed in the flyer but are not mentioned in the publication or in Bokushi’s texts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Entry fee: 25 <em>mon</em> per verse Total funds raised: 16 ryō 150 mon Judges’ remuneration: 6 ryō 1 bu in total (?) <em>Haigaku</em> frame-making: 2 ryō 1 shu 1265 mon Donation to the temple: 1,000 mon Unknown are the cost of the subsequent publication, and of prizes, advertisement, communication and associated socialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td><em>Jippyō hokkushū</em> (Kyoto: Tachibana-ya Jihei, 1802)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

*hokkushū*, in Niigataken kyōdo sōsho henshū iinkai (ed.), *Niigataken kyōdo sōsho*, vol. 7 (Rekishi toshosha, 1979), pp. 185-97.
After successfully organizing the 1797 competition, Bokushi dreamed of ‘the greatest haikai contest, exceeding all others in our province’.98 He discussed his plan with the district headman, Inokuchi Mokei, and enlisted his agreement to be the chief organizer of the project in a formal sense. The reasons for Bokushi’s approach to Mokei were probably a mixture of the personal, the cultural, the financial and the political. Mokei was a good friend of Bokushi’s, and a talented poet too. To initiate the project, Mokei agreed to offer support of ‘two or three ryō’ if Bokushi would do the rest of the work.99 Using the name of the district headman of Shiozawa as the chief organizer was probably a clever way of attracting attention from the larger community, while also respecting the reality of hierarchy and the need for cooperation among community members. Bokushi’s own role was described as ‘liaison and copyist’ (toritsugi seisho) in the flyer advertising the competition, and as ‘assistant’ (hojo) in the subsequent publication.100

According to Bokushi, he, as the administrator actually in charge, took all the initiative in organizing the contest, including arranging for ten haikai masters to be judges in Kyoto, Osaka, Edo and other places, and distributing an advertising flyer (hikifuda) as far afield as the provinces of Kōzuke and Musashi.101 Entrants were charged twenty-five mon per haikai, and more than sixteen ryō were gathered from the total of 4,102 entries

98 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 473.
99 Ibid.
101 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ1, p. 33.
during the eight months the contest was open. The total number of participants is unknown, as was always the case in this kind of haikai contest, as poets often entered multiple examples of their work. After closing the competition, the organizers (Bokushi claimed that he did it all himself) copied all the submitted verses as many as ten times each — the authors remaining anonymous — and sent a copy of all entries to each judge.

Each judge then selected the twenty-five verses he considered best, and the results were revealed in the presence of members of the haikai circle. The winning verses were ranked based on the number of judges who had selected them among their best twenty-five verses: the best and perfect poem would be one selected by all ten judges (no verse achieved this distinction), the second best was selected by nine judges (one verse), the third best by eight judges (three verses), the fourth best by seven judges (three verses) and, finally, the fifth best by six judges (thirty-one verses). Bokushi then organized the building of haigaku boards (at a cost of approximately two and a half ryō in total), on which he himself wrote the selected verses for display. In 1802, the haigaku boards were presented to

---

102 Ikegami’s Bonds of Civility is careless in reporting some figures, writing ‘16 mon per entry’ instead of twenty-five, ‘4,022 haikai entries’ instead of 4,102 (p. 208).
103 None of the haigaku in this area records the number of participants; however, a local history offers the guess that there may have been a limit on the number of verses from each participant, likely to have been five or ten. Tōkamachishi-shi hensan iinkai (ed.), Tōkamachishi-shi tsūshihen, vol. 3, p. 403.
104 ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 473; ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 34.
105 Inokuchi Mokei and Suzuki Bokushi (eds), ‘Jippyō hokkushū’, pp. 195-96. See also Isobe Sadaji, Suzuki Bokushi no shōgai (Sanjō, Niigata: Nojima shuppan, 1997), pp. 20-23. Ikegami misunderstands the system of judging, noting that ‘the ten judges … gave points to each entry on a 1-to-9 scale’ (Bonds of Civility, p. 209).
the temple in Urasa together with a donation of 1,000 mon from the entry fees for the contest. \(^{106}\) In the same year, the book resulting from the contest, entitled *Jippyō hokkushū* (Ten judges’ selection of haikai verses), was produced by a publisher specializing in haikai in Kyoto. It contained 288 verses selected by the ten judges (twenty-five verses under each judge’s name, in addition to thirty-eight winning verses in the first to the fifth places as mentioned above), together with ten verses contributed by the judges themselves. \(^{107}\)

In terms of the cultural context that enabled Bokushi to organize the competition in the way described above, the first noteworthy point is that Bokushi’s contests appear to have been a replica of those that had been developed by urban haikai poets in Kyoto or Osaka from around 1700. According to Suzuki Katsutada, haikai contests with a haigaku display at shrines or temples date back to 1703 in those cities. \(^{108}\) Using the format developed by urban organizers, haikai contests gradually spread into provincial areas throughout the eighteenth century. Typical features included the use of a shrine or temple to which the contest was dedicated, and where the results were exhibited in the form of haigaku; the circulation of advertising flyers; the collection of small fees from entrants; the employment of famous haikai masters to judge the contest; and the award of

---

106 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 36.  
107 Inokuchi Mokei and Suzuki Bokushi (eds), ‘Jippyō hokkushū’, pp. 185-97. A number of verses appear twice or more, because they were selected by more than one judge.  
various prizes to winners, which sometimes included a printed book of the winning verses.

Even in the Shiozawa area, Bokushi’s contests in 1797 and 1800 were not the first such undertakings by local poets. An earlier one, for example, had been held in Seki Village, a post-town next to Shiozawa, in 1790. The young poet Bokushi, then twenty-one years old, must have been stimulated by this contest: one of its organizers was a close friend of the Suzukis, who married Bokushi’s sister soon after, and Ryoro acted as a judge, representing the local haikai community alongside two urban judges. Bokushi himself achieved a good result as an entrant, having two of his verses selected for haigaku display. \(^{109}\) This event suggests that by 1790, both the know-how required to run a haikai contest and the necessary level of support among amateur poets were present even in such a rural community as the Shiozawa area.

Arranging judges from among famous haikai masters was one important job for the rural contest organizers, because the matter of who would judge their poems was crucial for local entrants. Local amateurs would naturally have felt honoured if their work were selected by someone with authority. It is not clear how Bokushi was able to secure the twelve haikai masters on the judging panels of his contests in 1797 and 1800. However, there was an established custom of haikai masters working for provincial events from their home: Rubinger shows, for example, that by the end of the seventeenth century, a custom of cooperation between urban haikai masters and contest organizers had already developed in the Osaka

area.\textsuperscript{110} Bokushi’s contests show that within a century, such cooperation with urban masters had also become possible for provincial poets.

Bokushi’s existing personal contacts with certain urban masters presumably also contributed to his success in procuring the judges. Among the total of twelve judges, Bokushi had visited two directly on his trip to Ise and the western provinces in 1796. He had met with the masters of another two of the judges on the same trip.\textsuperscript{111} The fact that Bokushi, an obscure rural amateur poet, could meet such leading practitioners suggests the willingness of urban \textit{haikai} masters to develop their rural contacts. Urban \textit{haikai} masters benefited from local \textit{haikai} contests in terms both of making money and of enlarging their reputations. One source records that the remuneration for the judges of the 1800 contest was 0.625 \textit{ryō} each.\textsuperscript{112} Suzuki Katsutada supposes that generally in this kind of contest, a half of the funds collected may have been paid to the judges.\textsuperscript{113} By 1800, urban \textit{haikai} masters were probably getting accustomed to this kind of proposal from rural organizers such as Bokushi. Working closely with the urban \textit{haikai} masters, some publishers, too, were probably quite willing to cater for such rural enterprises as this contest, by publishing the winning verses.

Not only personal connections, but also reliable communication networks were essential for Bokushi’s correspondence with the judges and publisher, which extended to the metropolises of Kyoto, Osaka and Edo, and even the provinces of Ise, Ōmi (present-day Shiga Prefecture) and

\textsuperscript{110} See Rubinger, \textit{Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{111} Bokushi met with Hasoku in Ise and Rajō (a judge of the 1797 contest) in Kyoto. He also met Sōkyū’s master, Rankō, in Kyoto and Tōkyō’s master, Niryū, in Osaka. ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 750, 763, 770.
\textsuperscript{112} SCS-T, vol. 2, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{113} Suzuki, \textit{Kinsei haikai-shi no kisō}, pp. 352-53.
Sanuki (present-day Kagawa Prefecture). At the least, the judges and Bokushi must have agreed about the terms of the judging of the contest before the event (three judges were replaced after the initial arrangement for some reason); and the judges must have received copies of all 4,102 submissions as well as their remuneration. We will discuss the state of the communication networks surrounding Bokushi in this period further in the next chapter.

The locations of the amateur poets who participated in this competition are significant in any assessment of how far this local enterprise stretched and how many poets beyond the community were involved. The geographical spread of the participants can roughly be estimated by analysing the publication resulting from the contest, as shown below.

Table 4.3: Geographical location of the poets whose verses were published in *Jippyō hokkushū* (1802)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Poets Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within Echigo Province</strong></td>
<td>104 poets (74.8%) from 37 towns/villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within Uonuma County</strong></td>
<td>77 poets (55.4%) from 33 towns/villages including Shiozawa (12 poets, 8.6%), Muikamachi (11 poets, 7.9%), Takenomata (5 poets), Ojiya (4), Horinouchi (4), Mokuraide (3), other villages (1 or 2 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Uonuma County</strong></td>
<td>27 poets (19.4%) from 4 towns including Nagaoka (12 poets), Mitsuke (6), Kashiwazaki (6), Izumoizaki (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Echigo Province</strong></td>
<td>35 poets (25.2%) from 17 towns/villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musashi Province</strong></td>
<td>17 poets (12.2%) from 5 towns including Oshi (8 poets), Hanyū (3), Warabi (2), Kumagaya (2), Kōnosu (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kōzuke Province</strong></td>
<td>12 poets (8.6%) from 8 towns/villages including Isechō (4 poets), Numata (2), other towns/villages (1 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shinano Province</strong></td>
<td>3 poets (2.2%) from Nanase Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mutsu Province</strong></td>
<td>1 poet from Aizu area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City of Edo</strong></td>
<td>1 poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ise Province</strong></td>
<td>1 poet from Heiji Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>139 poets (100%) from 54 towns/villages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from Inokuchi Mokei and Suzuki Bokushi (eds), *‘Jippyō hokkushū’*. 
Statistically, as we can see, this was still a local community-centred event. More than half of the successful poets resided in Uonuma County; they were spread across thirty-three places out of its 292 villages and towns. Poets in Shiozawa and Muikamachi as well as other neighbouring villages constitute significant groups of contributors to the publication. (Strangely, none was in Urasa, home of the temple to which the contest was dedicated.) The proportion of local poets would have been higher in the whole population of participants, as it is likely that less skilled amateurs tended to participate in contests that were held nearby, but not otherwise. Nevertheless, it is clear that this cultural event involved many people far beyond the conventional community boundary. Within Echigo Province, major centres of haikai practice such as the castle-town of Nagaoka and the port town of Kashiwazaki responded actively. At the same time, a quarter of the authors resided outside Echigo.  

The participation of poets from outside Uonuma County seems to have resulted from both physical and human connections. The Mikuni and Nakasendō Highways stretched from Izumozaki in the north to Edo in the south; major towns not on this route, such as Niigata and Takada, did not respond to this event (see Map 0.2). Economic activities on these highways probably helped convey information about the contest, especially as haikai practitioners included a great number of merchants. The connections with Nanase Village (near the Zenkōji temple) in Shinano Province and Heiji

---

114 Ikegami writes that ‘4,022 [sic.] haikai entries had been submitted by men and women from different status groups’, without identifying her source clearly (Bonds of Civility, pp. 208-09). So far, however, I have not found any data supporting her claim about gender and status. In ‘Jippyō hokkushū’, there is only one verse clearly marked as a woman’s work (p. 192), and no information about the participants’ statuses or even real names.
Village in Ise Province may be explained by pilgrimages, while the link with Aizu must have been based on political connections. In all cases, it is likely that human contacts and networking were significant in attracting entries to this *haikai* contest.

Finally, we should consider the impact of the 1800 *haikai* contest in particular on Bokushi’s own cultural development in later years. It is likely that the success of this event established his reputation as a leader of the *haikai* community in the Shiozawa area. Bokushi’s own verses were well received by the judges. He shared the first place with a local poet in terms of the number of his verses that were selected for publication (ten verses). He was ranked in the fifth place in terms of the number of judges’ commendations on a particular verse (seven judges). After this event, Bokushi himself was invited to judge local *haikai* contests, albeit much smaller ones than the 1800 competition, in 1805, 1808 and 1841, as far as we can confirm from existing *haigaku* boards.¹¹⁵ Bokushi’s own record shows that he judged another three contests (one in 1821, the others in unknown years), while contributing his work to contests or similar events thirty-two times in total up to 1838.¹¹⁶ Through all these activities, Bokushi must have cultivated further personal contacts with a great number of people, ranging from famous urban masters to local amateur poets, as we will see more fully in Chapter Five.

At the same time, however, the 1800 contest made clear to Bokushi the dilemma between the pursuit of cultural development and his responsibility to the family business. He realized that conducting a *haikai*

---

¹¹⁶ See ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 662-68.
competition on such a scale as this event required the sacrifice of a huge amount of time and energy, which might otherwise have been spent on the business, and therefore decided not to organize any more haikai contests. He wrote to the effect that this kind of pursuit could be never-ending if one kept organizing events on an ever-larger scale, and as a result became unable to forget the ‘taste’ of fame.¹¹⁷

Yet, in reality Bokushi probably did not forget the taste of fame. Rather, this event may have ignited his ambition to publish his own book more widely, beyond the haikai-poet community. As will be shown in Chapter Six, it was around this period that Bokushi started sending enquiries to urban authors about the possibility of jointly writing a book on the snow country for publication.

* * * * * * *

If we return to Bokushi’s first trip to Edo in 1788, and the question of his cultural capacity at the age of nineteen, we can chart his intellectual development from childhood to the point of the trip and beyond. As was briefly noted in Chapter One, the 1788 trip was made on the pretext of selling chijimi textile in the metropolis, but in effect, it was Bokushi’s first study tour as a young rural intellectual. The factors discussed above help to explain many of his actions on his trip. Most obviously, Bokushi’s developing cultural knowledge was embodied in the haikai and Chinese poetry he composed while travelling, including 169 haikai verses and

¹¹⁷ ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, p. 473. Also see ‘Eisei kirokushū, SBZ2, p. 34.
twenty-nine Chinese poems contained in his travelogue, ‘Tōyū kikōshū’.

They can be seen as an outcome of Bokushi’s three years of study of both haikai and Chinese poetry from the age of sixteen.

Even more interesting is his study of calligraphy in Edo. After enjoying urban entertainment, including visits to tourist spots and amusement quarters as well as to book-lenders, Bokushi decided to take calligraphy lessons from Sawada Tōkō, an illustrious calligrapher and Chinese scholar of the time. Bokushi’s companion, Kōshichi, who had travelled with him from Shiozawa, also excitedly joined this venture.

According to Bokushi’s recollection, they were warmly welcomed by the teacher, who admired the commitment they showed to study even though they lived in a distant province. Paying 2,000 mon each in school fees, Bokushi and Kōshichi attended a class, together with many samurai boys, at Tōkō’s private academy. The news that they had become preoccupied with calligraphy while staying in Edo supposedly on chijimi business was soon conveyed to Shiozawa. But Bokushi’s parents, at least, regarded their action favourably.

Bokushi’s calligraphy lessons in Edo encapsulate many aspects discussed in this chapter. Having received primary education at a terakoya and independently from local priests, this young man from an elite rural family was able to cope with calligraphy training at one of the most popular private academies in Edo. The significance of his village-based education was not only that it gave the students practical skills in calligraphy and

118 See ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 718-40.
120 Ibid.
knowledge in Chinese, but also that it had narrowed their psychological distance from the urban standard. As was also discussed above, meetings with travelling practitioners of the arts were another important factor in narrowing the gap. Moreover, it is clear that rural people like Bokushi already had considerable information about cultural life and customs in Edo. Although there is no evidence that Bokushi looked up a published directory of artists and scholars when he decided to go to Tōkō’s academy, it is apparent that he knew that such private academies in Edo were open to provincial travellers too, and that he knew what he was supposed to do in terms of admission, payment and behaviour in the class. Also noteworthy is Bokushi’s parents’ approval of his actions, which confirms a certain family culture around him that was supportive of educational and artistic pursuits.

After this trip, Bokushi’s cultural and psychological distance from the ‘centre’ continued to narrow through his involvement in the haikai network. His trip to Ise, Kyoto, Osaka and other western provinces in 1796 contributed much to his building of connections with other haikai poets. The haikai contests in 1797 and 1800 brought him to the next phase in communication, from being a recipient of information to a more active role. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Bokushi’s communication network then developed extensively, to the point where it encompassed a number of illustrious figures in the arts as well as a great many of his own counterparts all over Japan. All of this helped nurture his further ambition in literary activities, which eventually led him to write a book about his snowy region, as we will see in Chapter Six.
Chapters Five and Six also continue to examine the crucial question of the extent to which Bokushi eventually achieved freedom in crossing cultural boundaries between the ‘periphery’ and the ‘centre’. Thus I further analyse the cultural mechanisms and historical context of Bokushi’s participation in central networks in terms of communication and literary production.
Chapter Five

**Correspondence and the Cultural Elite:**

**Bokushi’s Communication Network**

People’s networks of communication are significantly related to social frameworks as well as to infrastructure. The question of with whom one can and does communicate depends on social conditions including culture and politics, together with infrastructural support including the transport and communication systems. In Japan, the early nineteenth century is remarkable as a period when people in the provinces, even if only the privileged strata, were able to exchange letters over a broad area, possibly throughout the country. Bokushi was one individual who took great advantage of such developments in communication.

This chapter examines Bokushi’s communication with other members of the artistic community, both urban and provincial, as a case study of the rural elite’s use of the developing communication network in the context of late Tokugawa social transformation. In the area of communication, Bokushi clearly crossed conventional boundaries in terms of geographical distance, cultural activities, and status in the social and cultural order. At the same time, the networks he constructed reflect the limitations and context within which rural figures communicated with others, especially with their urban counterparts. My examination here shows, firstly, that the communication network among provincial and urban practitioners of the arts in this period was far larger and denser than has conventionally been thought, and, more importantly, that both the
information gap and the communication barrier between urban and rural people were gradually but significantly contracting in this period. I also, however, consider the limits of Bokushi’s communication network. Social transformation enabled him to develop his network to a remarkable extent, but his ability to communicate was also constrained by his historical context.

This chapter thus contributes to recent discussions of the ‘Tokugawa network revolution’, the term used by Eiko Ikegami in her 2005 book, Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origin of Japanese Culture. My findings here to a certain extent support the view of Ikegami as well as many other scholars that there was a significant ‘increase in scale and density of network intersections’ in the Tokugawa period, which in effect weakened conventional social boundaries. However, my analysis of Bokushi’s materials differs from Ikegami’s interpretation of such a development in information networks. Bokushi was less free from existing social frameworks than Ikegami’s analysis would suggest. Whereas Ikegami stresses the separation between people’s cultural networks and the prevailing social structure, I argue that in the case of Bokushi, the freedom in communication he undoubtedly enjoyed was still much constrained by the existing political, economic and social order.

I begin by identifying the size of Bokushi’s communication network. Then, I examine the ways in which he built up this network, together with its historical context, before discussing the use of the mail system. I go on to focus on the practice of letter-writing in terms of frequency and volume, in the cases of Bokushi and of his urban correspondents, Bakin and Kyōzan. Finally, I examine the content of communication among the literati by focusing on the letters of Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan.

**Bokushi’s Communication Network**

Bokushi’s collection of other people’s artistic works and letters as well as his records of his collection and correspondence are a significant showcase for the content and extent of communication among rural and urban practitioners of the arts in the late Tokugawa period. Bokushi displayed and recorded artistic and literary works in a number of ways, including by decorating byōbu-screens and roll screens with collages of poems, pictures and calligraphy; compiling scrapbooks of his collection of poems and pictures by other practitioners of the arts; and sorting and recording an enormous number of haikai verses that he received from other poets (see Figure 5.1). It is likely that Bokushi’s collection of artistic and literary works, as well as his communication network, was developed on the basis of his father’s activities from the 1770s onwards. The artistic byōbu-screens in the Suzuki family had first been produced by Jōemon in 1780, after which Bokushi created another three pairs of his own in 1812,

---

1821 and 1822.³ Again probably influenced by his father, Bokushi started collecting pieces of artistic and literary work from fellow practitioners of the arts in 1787 at the age of eighteen, producing the first volume of his art scrapbooks in 1802.⁴

Figure 5.1: Bokushi’s collection of artwork by others

³ See ibid., pp. 365, 370, 373.
With respect to letters from other people, Bokushi also compiled many volumes of scrapbooks of selected letters, of which the most important are letters from Takizawa Bakin and Santō Kyōzan (see Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: Letters from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi**
In addition to collecting artistic works by and letters from other people, Bokushi produced several sets of records of his collection, which in effect worked as address books of his correspondents. For example, in 1802 he produced a list of the writers of letters that he had pasted in his scrapbooks. The writers were numbered; one book went up to 542, and another listed 224 more names, although there was considerable duplication of the writers' names.5 Another notebook produced in 1822 demonstrates an interesting system of classifying his correspondents and the producers of the works he collected (see Figure 5.3). Bokushi used a stamp to put two circles beside the names of those with whom he had met face to face ('taigan' or 'taibi'), and one circle beside those with whom he had not yet met but from whom he had received letters or pieces of work directly ('buntsū'). He made no mark beside those from whom he had just collected pieces of work without direct contact as yet ('fuchiki').

5 ‘Kumoi no kari’, in SBZ2, pp. 383-400.
The list of four people on the left side of the page can be translated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>contact level</th>
<th>literary pseudonym</th>
<th>work collected</th>
<th>remarks</th>
<th>address</th>
<th>real name, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>90-year-old Guzen</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kanazawa in Kaga</td>
<td>Retired head priest of Daijō-ji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>Shunji</td>
<td>poem (card)</td>
<td>district magistrate of Aizu han</td>
<td>Aizu in Mutsu</td>
<td>Yoshida Hanzō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>Bakin</td>
<td>poem (card)</td>
<td>a.k.a. Kyokutei or Saryū Inkyo</td>
<td>Moto-iida-chō in Edo</td>
<td>Takizawa Seiemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter</td>
<td>Hagi no yaō</td>
<td>poem (card)</td>
<td>a.k.a. Ōyano Urazumi</td>
<td>Kanabuki-chō in Edo</td>
<td>Shirakoya Magozaimon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shiozawamachi bunka supōtsu jigyō shinkō kōsha (ed.), Zusetsu Bokushi, p. 34.

This system of classification, in which the level of contact with a given person could be easily ascertained and updated by stamping a circle or two, clearly reveals Bokushi’s intention to develop his communication
network as widely and directly as possible. It also plainly demonstrates the mixture of ‘aesthetic’ and ‘worldly’ interests among rural practitioners of the arts. Bokushi’s correspondents were recorded under their haikai pseudonyms, places of residence and real names. In the case of samurai and priests, the han, the temples or shrines to which they belonged, and their status in the organization if applicable, were clearly identified.

These address books provide good information about Bokushi’s communication network in terms of its size, geographical spread and social breadth. Firstly, the number of his correspondents can be estimated at several hundred. Inoue Keiryū, for instance, a biographer of Bokushi, counted as many as 2,000 names of poets and writers found in all Bokushi’s extant materials, but gave an estimate of his actual correspondents of around 400 people, after taking duplication into account.6 As for Bokushi himself, in an 1836 letter he proudly claimed that ‘I have now collected letters and cards from around 600 people, including dignitaries and distinguished priests’.7 Caution, however, is necessary in interpreting this claim. It took Bokushi several decades to acquire some hundreds of correspondents, and, accordingly, the lists included many relationships that were inactive at any given time. Moreover, as we will see below, the content of Bokushi’s correspondence varied, from highly personal and lengthy communication to mere collections of printed greeting cards. Thus, it may not be appropriate to classify all the people on Bokushi’s lists as his ‘correspondents’.

---

7 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 967.
Secondly, the geographical spread of Bokushi’s correspondents as revealed in his address books exemplifies the vigorous exchange of letters among literary people in both cities and provinces in this period. As we can see in Figure 5.4 below, Bokushi’s correspondents were spread across Japan, from Mutsu Province (present-day Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate and Aomori Prefectures) in the north-east to Satsuma Province (present-day Kagoshima Prefecture) in the south-west. Using his own classification, discussed above, those with whom Bokushi had actually met were in twenty provinces (the black areas on the map; including Tsushima which was officially classified as ‘island’ rather than ‘province’); correspondents whom he had not yet met were in another twenty provinces (striped areas); and people from whom he had only collected artistic work, without direct contact either personally or by mail, were in a further eleven provinces (dotted areas) among the sixty-eight provinces (including two ‘islands’) that then made up Japan.
To gain a more accurate picture of Bokushi’s communication network, which naturally did not cover all these provinces evenly, we need to analyse the intensity of his correspondence with people in each area. Bokushi produced two catalogues of his letter-collection from 1802 onwards, listing 663 letters in total. Figure 5.5 shows the numbers of letters from each province listed in these catalogues. To further the analysis, I have also compiled Table 5.1 that classifies the producers of haikai cards (tanzaku) in Bokushi’s collection into their places of residence. The
source is ‘Tanzaku hikaechō’ (Record of my collection of haikai cards) produced by Bokushi around 1832.\(^8\) (There are some discrepancies in geographical spread of Bokushi’s correspondents among Figures 5.4, 5.5 and Table 5.1, because the original sources differ from each other.)

\textbf{Figure 5.5: Number of letters in Bokushi’s letter-collection and their provinces or cities of origin, ca 1802}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Region & Letters & Region & Letters \\
\hline
Echigo & 285 & Sado & 6 \\
City of Edo & 129 & Owari & 6 \\
Kōzuke & 27 & Buzen & 1 \\
Settsu & 23 & Higo & 1 \\
Mutsu & 22 & Iga & 1 \\
City of Kyoto & 20 & Izumo & 1 \\
Hitachi & 14 & Kii & 5 \\
Ise & 14 & Kawachi & 1 \\
Mino & 14 & Kōzuke & 27 \\
Musashi (except Edo) & 14 & Kaga & 5 \\
Shinano & 12 & Kai & 5 \\
Kazusa & 11 & Izumo & 1 \\
Dewa & 10 & Kōzuke & 27 \\
Ōmi & 8 & Mutsu & 1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}


\(^8\) This source was first discussed by Takahashi Minoru in 1985, and is now available in Takahashi Minoru, \textit{Zayū no Bokushi} (Sanjō, Niigata: Nojima shuppan, 2003), pp. 208-37.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province / City</th>
<th>Number of poets</th>
<th>Number of places within the province</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 City of Edo</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>S*: 7, F*: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Echigo</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>S: 3, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Kōzuke</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>S: 3, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Shinano</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>S: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Musashi (except Edo)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>S: 3, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 District of Ise Great Shrine</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 City of Osaka</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 City of Kyoto</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Mino</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Ōmi</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Mutsu</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Kazusa</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Kiō</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>S: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Sado</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Dewa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>S: 1, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Owari</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S: 2, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Noto</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Settsu (except Osaka)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Izumo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S: 3, F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Bizen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Sagami</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Hitachi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Echizen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Etchū</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Kawachi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Hizen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Kai</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Awa (in Kantō, not in Shikoku)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Izumi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Shimōsa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Harima</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Shimotsuke</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Tōtōmi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Suruga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Bungo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Kaga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Inaba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Mimasaka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 Nagato</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Iyo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Sanuki</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Satsuma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not classified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Daimyo: 3? S: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>397</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from Takahashi Minoru, *Zayū no Bokushi*, pp. 208-37. S denotes the number of samurai poets, F the number of female poets.)
It is apparent that Bokushi’s correspondence was heavily concentrated in his own province (285 letters in Figure 5.5; fifty-one poets in twenty-three towns and villages in Table 5.1). This seems only natural; however, it also constitutes evidence of the widespread existence of literate people in the provinces, whose letters and haikai cards were considered by Bokushi to be worth collecting and preserving. If this was the case with Bokushi and his peers in Echigo, a similar or even larger scale of communication is likely to have existed in many other provinces, as Echigo at that time cannot be considered advanced in terms of cultural development.

As for Bokushi’s communication with other areas, Edo was prime among them (129 letters; eighty-five poets). The amount of his communication with Edo should be understood as proof of the increasing economic and cultural influence of the metropolis over Echigo Province in general, and Bokushi’s remarkable ties with a number of urban writers and artists in particular, as will be discussed below. The third most significant area in both data is Kōzuke, which was a neighbouring province, located on the way to Edo. The figures for Musashi Province can also be explained by its geographical proximity, as it was located next to Kōzuke and on the outskirts of Edo. Communication with people in Mutsu Province probably resulted from both Uonuma County’s political tie with Aizu han, which was based in Mutsu, and Bokushi’s personal artistic network. As I explained in the previous chapter, members of the local Uonuma elite had established good relations, not only politically but also through cultural exchange, with samurai officials dispatched from there. For example, ‘Eisei kirokushū’
records fifteen meetings between Bokushi and Aizu-han officials during the period of 1819-28 alone. On some of these occasions, Bokushi gave and received artistic works such as poems and pictures. 9 His favourite ‘aesthetic’ samurai official was ‘District Magistrate (gundai) Mr Yoshida’, whose name appears in Figure 5.3 above. In 1825, Bokushi proudly recorded that on the occasion of Aizu han’s annual crop inspection, he exchanged poems with Yoshida and received from him in person a tea bowl featuring a picture by Tani Bunchō (1763-1841), a leading painter of the time in Edo.10 In addition to the Aizu area, however, Bokushi’s collection of haikai cards also derived from Morioka, Sendai and two other places in Mutsu Province. It is further evident that the cities of Kyoto and Osaka and the district of the Ise Great Shrine (called ‘shinto’ or the Divine Capital in Bokushi’s texts) were of considerable cultural importance to Bokushi. Mino and Ōmi Provinces also appear prominently; this is attributable to the strong influence of haikai masters from those regions.11

As examined above, the extent of Bokushi’s correspondence in terms both of quantity and of geographical spread undoubtedly exceeds conventional expectations of the life of a rural resident in the late Tokugawa period. At the same time, however, it is clear that the extent of Bokushi’s communication was partly determined and limited by the particular historical and geographical conditions of his time and place. The number of correspondents, as many as several hundred, certainly sounds enormous, but the actual quality of communication between Bokushi and his

9 See ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 70-98.
10 Ibid., p. 90. On a similar occasion in 1827, Bokushi again received a picture by Bunchō from Yoshida (ibid., p. 95).
correspondents must have varied. Similarly, the geographical spread of his correspondence networks is remarkable, but in some degree it was predictable on the basis of the economic, social and cultural ties between Shiozawa and other places in Bokushi’s day. I will now examine in what ways and in what context Bokushi built such wide networks of correspondence, and identify the mechanisms and motives of his network-building as well as the inevitable limitations of his communications.

**Methods and Context of Bokushi’s Network-Building**

Bokushi’s correspondence network was twofold in structure. On the one hand it constituted a horizontal connection among provincial poets and intellectuals, in which Bokushi was a vigorous participant. On the other hand, Bokushi maintained a significant level of contact with urban professionals in the arts. Bokushi’s case in fact clearly illustrates the development of contacts between rural amateurs and urban professionals in various artistic fields. An important question is what historical context allowed Bokushi to build such diverse contacts.

An initial step in the building of his network was Bokushi’s involvement in the *haikai* society. Among many studies dealing with communication among *haikai* poets, Yaba Katsuyuki’s work offers the findings most relevant here. Yaba first points to the significant development in communication among *haikai* poets beyond their own factions around the end of the eighteenth century. Like other literary historians, he stresses that this inter-factional and inter-provincial
communication was stimulated by various factors: first and most generally, the increase in people’s mobility through travel and other means; secondly, the popularization of haikai itself, as we have observed in Chapter Four; and thirdly and more specifically, a nation-wide movement to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the death of Matsuo Bashō (1644-94), the acknowledged master who was common to almost all factions in haikai-writing in those days. Bokushi’s own region offers striking evidence of such development of communication among haikai poets. For instance, Nezu Tōro (1726-?) of Tōkamachi, a leading poet and wealthy chijimi merchant, published a haikai anthology in 1790, Kachō fūgetsu-shū, to commemorate the centennial anniversary of Basho’s death. Verses were contributed to this anthology by 1,413 poets, who were intentionally selected from all of Japan’s provinces. Such a publication would not have been possible unless Tōro had commanded a wide network of communication. As an active Uonuma poet, Bokushi must have benefited from the general spread of communication by and among poets in his region.

The next and probably more important step for Bokushi in developing his own personal communication network resulted from the so-called ‘holograph collection boom’ among haikai practitioners. A ‘holograph’ or ‘hisseki’ or ‘shuseki’, meaning work of someone’s ‘brush’ or ‘hand’, was a piece of paper or card on which a poet or painter produced his or her work, usually including his or her autograph. Many amateur poets

---

12 See Yaba Katsuyuki, Shokan ni okeru kinsei kōki haikai no kenkyū (Seishōdō shoten, 1997), esp. pp. 21-23, 34-44.
started collecting such ‘holographs’ from other poets and painters who lived at some distance from them. Their collections had originally been a kind of proof and record of meetings with other poets; however, keen collectors also began to seek ‘holographs’ through an intermediary or directly by mail. It is particularly important from the viewpoint of the development of communication networks that enthusiastic collectors in many places around the country began to work reciprocally: that is, not only exchanging their own works with each other but also offering help in building up each other’s collections using their own networks.\textsuperscript{14}

As Yaba recognized, Bokushi was undoubtedly an extraordinarily active collector of ‘holographs’. One of his letters vividly illustrates how such enthusiasts worked with others to build their collections. In 1800, Bokushi wrote to Narusawa Untai (1739-1824) in Shinano Province, whose collection of holographs and network of correspondence are believed to have been some of the largest among provincial haikai poets.\textsuperscript{15} The letter reveals that both Bokushi and Untai had their own books of holographs (‘tekagami’ or ‘fude kagami’) (see Figure 5.1.B above), and had asked each other to collect specimens of other people’s work using a specific size of paper. (Bokushi sent his own paper to Untai, and prepared specific paper for Untai according to his instructions.) In the letter, Bokushi asked Untai for a piece of work by a particular provincial painter because he had heard that this amateur painter would visit Untai’s place soon.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Yaba, \textit{Shokan ni yoru kinsei kōki haikai no kenkyū}, pp. 22-23, 29-34.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp. 296-97. For Untai, see ibid., pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 296.
These holograph-collectors had a range of interests beyond *haikai* poetry as well, and were thus keen to widen their communication networks to include other writers, artists and collectors. They exchanged Japanese poems in various styles such as *waka*, *ren*ga, *kyōka* and *haikai*; Chinese poems; calligraphy; painting both in Chinese and in Japanese style; maps; and bizarre-looking stones (*kiseki*). Personal letters written by famous figures to someone else were also a target for collectors. For example, one of Bokushi’s literary friends in Echigo, Shibuya Hokuyō (1788-1852), had collected 119 letters exchanged among other people as well as letters to himself by around 1826. This collection includes a letter from Kuroiwa Rohaku (1746-1824) to Bokushi in 1819. Rohaku was a leading *haikai* poet in Kusatsu in Közuke Province, who ran a hot spring inn where Bokushi stayed several times.¹⁷

A letter from Bokushi to a fellow collector in Echigo in 1828 demonstrates that holograph-collectors exchanged items beyond their major areas of interest. This collector, Ōwaki Harumine, a local scholar of *kokugaku* or national learning, was keen to acquire many holographs to commemorate special birthdays among his family members, which seems to have been a common motive among these collectors.¹⁸ Harumine thus sent

---

¹⁸ Harumine was planning to celebrate the eightieth, seventieth, sixtieth and fortieth birthdays of his grandmother, father, mother and himself respectively: Takahashi, *Zayū no Bokushi*, p. 99. Bokushi also collected many pieces of artistic work for his own *kanreki*, a special celebration at the age of sixty-one, in 1830. See Takizawa Bakin (compiled by Hora Tomio), *Bakin Nikki* (4 vols), vol. 1 (Chūō kōronsha, 1973), p. 412, and ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 283, 290. It should be noted here that in Japanese premodern custom, people celebrated their birthdays together on New Year’s Day, because everyone added one year to his or her age on New Year’s Day.
a piece of his own work, a picture (ga), to Bokushi and asked Bokushi to
write a poem (san) on it to match the picture. Harumine also asked
Bokushi to help him collect many holograph works through Bokushi’s
network. In reply, Bokushi apologized for not yet having done much with
respect to this request, but still enclosed ten people’s holograph works taken
from his own collection, including letters from Bakin as well as letters or
pieces of artistic work from haikai masters, painters and specialists in
Chinese poetry in Edo, Kyoto, Settsu, Shinano and Kōzuke. This letter
from Bokushi suggests that collectors gave and received items on a broad
basis, not necessarily according to their real interest in and knowledge of a
particular genre of literature or the arts, and not necessarily restricting
themselves to works produced by a particular faction or individual author.

The more you could offer, the more you were respected by other
holograph enthusiasts. Bokushi was apparently aware that on occasions he
could offer valuable items to other people. One case, probably in 1832,
demonstrates that he was prepared to show off his urban connections to his
local peers. In that year, Bokushi sent Kyōzan as many as twenty-five
pictures that he had painted, requesting that Kyōzan write a poem on each
one of them. Kyōzan sent back the whole lot in the following year.19
Bokushi also requested Bakin and other famous figures to do the same, with
results as shown in Figure 5.6 below.20

---

19 ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 310. This letter has no entry
indicating the year, but can be presumed to have been written in 1833.
20 Bakin’s diary has an entry on 1833/1/25 noting that Bokushi sent thirteen
pictures painted by him to Bakin requesting Bakin to write poems on them.
Figure 5.6: Artistic collaborations between Bokushi’s pictures (ga) and famous writers’ poems (san)

Bokushi and Kyōzan (left); Bokushi and Bakin (top); Bokushi and priest Kaiun of Untōan temple.


Presumably, Bokushi then gave these pictures to others on appropriate occasions. Undoubtedly Bokushi’s pictures increased in value by having poems by a famous Edo writer inscribed on them. Such collaboration in poetry and painting also demonstrated Bokushi’s close relationship with Kyōzan, the urban writer. It was not only the holographs of urban writers, famous artists, religious figures and high-ranking samurai and aristocrats that were considered valuable, however. An 1839 letter
from Bokushi to a friend on Sado Island asked the friend to obtain several pieces of calligraphy, representing the character ‘kotobuki’ or ‘long life’, by a one-hundred-year-old man on the island. Such long-lived persons were rare then, and so the man’s calligraphy could be seen as a good-luck charm promoting the chances of a long life. Bokushi wrote, ‘The more pieces, the more I will appreciate it’, ‘because I want to give some to samurai officials or my relatives’.21

It can be presumed that Bokushi’s contacts with fellow practitioners of the arts in the provinces and his collection of their artistic and literary works were developed largely in such contexts and through such mechanisms as those discussed above. We will now examine his connection with urban or famous writers and artists. Here the focus shifts to the significance of social boundaries rather than geographical distance in Bokushi’s network-building.

Let us firstly look at the extent of Bokushi’s contact with urban figures. The remoteness of his location and the modesty of his lifestyle notwithstanding, Bokushi’s address books list a number of illustrious persons in the arts. In Table 5.2 below, List A shows famous figures in the arts with whom Bokushi met, and from whom he received pieces of artistic or literary work, either during their meetings or later by mail. It also shows the occasions of their first meeting. (In fact, in many cases there was only one meeting.) List B presents famous figures with whom

21 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 977.
Bokushi corresponded, but whom he did not meet. The data in both cases covers the period up to about 1822.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{22} See ‘Kaidai’, in SBZ2, p. 426.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
<th>Occasion of their first meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kanō Baishō</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Baishō’s trip to Echigo in 1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawada Tōkō</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuroiwa Rohaku</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Kusatsu</td>
<td>Bokushi’s hot-spring treatment in 1792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakushubijin Rajō</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Nagoya</td>
<td>Bokushi’s pilgrimage to Ise in 1796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinpūkan Kyūkō</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Ise</td>
<td>Bokushi’s pilgrimage to Ise in 1796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baigetsuan Hasoku</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Ise</td>
<td>Bokushi’s pilgrimage to Ise in 1796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunjūan Kidō</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Kidō’s trip to Echigo in 1810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki Fuyō</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Fuyō’s trip to Echigo in 1812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jippensha Ikku</td>
<td>Story-writing</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Ikku’s trip to Echigo in 1818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kameda Bōsai</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murakami Michihiko</td>
<td><em>Haikai</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōta Nanpo</td>
<td>Poetry, story-writing</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takizawa Bakin</td>
<td>Story-writing</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tani Bunchō</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Bokushi’s trip to Edo in 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teisai Hokuba</td>
<td><em>Ukiyoe</em></td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Hokuba’s trip to Echigo in 1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santō Kyōzan</td>
<td>Story-writing</td>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Kyōzan’s trip to Echigo in 1836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List B: Those from whom Bokushi directly received letters or pieces of artistic or literary work, but with whom he had not met (to about 1822)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ōta Kinjō</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santō Kyōden</td>
<td>Story-writing</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natsume Seibi</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichimuan Jōsa</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Kyoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setchūan Kanrai</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setchūan Ryōta</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassenbō Daigaku</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōtomonō Ōemaru</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasuda Isaibō</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Mino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobayashi Issa</td>
<td>Haikai</td>
<td>Shinano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichikawa Danjūro V</td>
<td>Kabuki</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ichikawa Danjūro VII</td>
<td>Kabuki</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwai Hanshirō V</td>
<td>Kabuki</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishikawa Masamochi</td>
<td>Kyōka-poetry</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōyano Urazumi</td>
<td>Kyōka-poetry</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okada Gyokuzan</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utagawa Toyokuni</td>
<td>Ukiyoe</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōgi-ya Hanaōgi</td>
<td>Waka/kyōka-poetry</td>
<td>Edo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from ‘Harimaze byōbu kunidokoro seimeichō’, in SBZ2, pp. 357-80.

As has been emphasized in many commentaries on Bokushi’s life,23 it is indeed amazing that this farmer-merchant had direct contact with such celebrated writers as Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823) and Ishikawa Rokujuen (1753-1830) as well as Ikku, Kyōden, Kyōzan and Bakin, or with famous calligraphers and Confucian scholars like Sawada Tōkō (1732-96), Kameda Bōsai (1752-1826) and Ōta Kinjō (1765-1825). Even more surprising are Bokushi’s connections with the kabuki stars Ichikawa Danjūrō V (1741-1806), Ichikawa Danjūrō VII (1791-1859) and Iwai Hanshirō V (1776-1847). Perhaps the most unexpected connection of all, however, was the one between Bokushi and the star courtesan Hanaōgi of the Ōgi-ya

---

house in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter in Edo. (Seemingly there were several women who succeeded to this great courtesan name, Hanaōgi. Bokushi wrote that he exchanged letters with more than one of those courtesans,24 but I can not ascertain exactly who they were.) Figure 5.5 shows ukiyo-e portraits of Danjūrō VII and Hanaōgi, which are proof of their popularity of the time.

**Figure 5.7: Ukiyo-e portraits of Ichikawa Danjūrō VII (by Utagawa Kunisada) (left) and Hanaōgi of the Ōgiya (by Katsukawa Shunchō) (right)**


Here, however, we must be careful not to jump to the conclusion that Tokugawa cultural space was virtually borderless with regard to participation by the rural literati in the central community of the arts. The relationships between Bokushi and these famous figures were most likely quite varied. In some cases, Bokushi was probably perhaps no more than a keen collector of artwork by these urban figures. After around 1800, many

24 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 904.
provincial people visited or wrote to famous artists and scholars in the cities. Some of the prominent figures mentioned above certainly were the centre of such attention from provincial people. It is said, for example, that Ōta Nanpo set aside a specific day in every month to meet and write poems for such visitors — he even used an assistant writer for such requests, virtually openly. Kameda Bōsai, who also appears in Table 5.2, was a very popular calligrapher, who was believed to earn more than five ryō a day dealing with visitors’ requests. Bokushi visited both Nanpo and Bōsai on his second trip to Edo in 1819, obtaining large pieces of their calligraphy, which became his treasured possessions. In 1821 Bokushi made a pair of byōbu-screens to display the calligraphy received from Bōsai and Nanpo. He instructed his descendants not to sell these byōbu under any circumstances. When in Edo, Bokushi also went to purchase pictures from Tani Bunchō. These were clearly relationships between a fan and famous figures in the arts, and there seems to be nothing else to suggest any stronger connection between Bokushi and Nanpo, Bōsai or Bunchō.

More difficult to understand are Bokus hi’s relations with celebrated urban entertainers such as the actors Danjūrō V and Danjūrō VII, and the courtesans known as Hanaōgi. These connections are very interesting in terms of the extent of one rural person’s cultural network, which in this case reached well beyond conventional social boundaries. Danjūrō V and his grandson, Danjūrō VII, were arguably the most popular actors during the

26 Ibid., p. 274.
27 ‘Harimaze byōbu kunidokoro seimeichō’, in SBZ2, pp. 359, 369-70.
heyday of kabuki theatre in Edo. 28 Similarly, the courtesans who succeeded to the name of Hanaōgi were always celebrities in the pleasure quarter of Yoshiwara. Bokushi, on the other hand, seems to have been the last man who would indulge in such urban entertainment. As we have already seen in Chapters One and Three, he only made two trips to Edo, when he was nineteen and fifty years old, and visiting pleasure quarters was totally disapproved of in his house policy.

Nevertheless, it seems that Bokushi’s communication with these urban celebrities was neither one-way nor one-off. In the notebook recording his haikai card collection, Bokushi said that he had kept in contact with Danjūrō V for more than twelve years. 29 If this is true, Bokushi began corresponding with Danjūrō V, who died in 1806, around or even before the star actor’s retirement in 1796. Concerning Danjūrō VII, Bokushi wrote that he first received some holograph works from him in 1817, 30 that is, at a time when this actor was very popular. In ‘Yonabegusa’, Bokushi expressed his regret that he had not paid a courtesy visit to the house of Danjūrō VII during his trip to Edo in 1819, 31 meaning that Bokushi, at least, thought that the relationship would have allowed him to do so. As for evidence of the relationship between Bokushi and

28 See, for example, Geinōshi kenkyūkai (ed.), Nihon geinōshi, vol. 6 (Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 1988), pp. 228-35, and Nishiyama Matsunosuke et al. (eds), Edogaku jiten (Kōbundō, 1994), pp. 505-06.
29 Bokushi’s ‘Tanzaku hikaechō’, compiled in about the 1820s. See Takahashi, Zayū no Bokushi, p. 226.
30 Ibid.
31 ‘Isho’, in SBZ1, p. 907.
Hanaōgi, there is just one verse that he wrote in return for a poem Hanaōgi sent to him.32

Probably, we should see Danjūrō V, Danjūrō VII and Hanaōgi primarily as members of a literary salon in Edo rather than as actors or courtesans, as far as their communication with Bokushi is concerned. Outside the theatre, Danjūrō V and VII were keen practitioners of *haikai* and *kyōka* poetry, and socialized with famous literati such as Nanpo and Kyōden. The Yoshiwara parlour, Ōgi-ya, where Hanaōgi worked, functioned as a literary salon for a group of *kyōka* poets including Nanpo, Kyōden, Danjūrō V and Tsutaya Jūzaburō (1750-97), an entrepreneurial publisher. Presumably Hanaōgi and other high-ranking courtesans were influenced by the master of the parlour, who was a *kyōka* poet and good friend of Nanpo, Kyōden and other literati in Edo, and a cultural leader in the pleasure quarter.33 In fact, Kyōden’s first wife had been Hanaōgi’s assistant courtesan before they married.34 Thus it might have been Kyōden who enabled Bokushi to make first contact with Danjūrō V and Hanaōgi, because Bokushi had approached Kyōden probably as early as 1797 about the possibility of producing a book about the snow country, as we will fully discuss in Chapter Six. Even if this was the case, however, it is difficult in the end to conceive of any benefit that these urban celebrities might have derived from their communication with Bokushi, the rural amateur poet and painter.

34 Takizawa Bakin, ‘Iwademonoki’ (1819), in Kokusho kankōkai (ed.), *Shin enseki jisshu*, vol. 4 (Kokusho kankōkai, 1913), p. 188.
The most important of Bokushi’s complicated relationships with urban literati were those with Bakin and Kyōzan. Amongst some other known cases, the Bokushi-Bakin and Bokushi-Kyōzan connections most clearly show the potential of rural-urban relationships among practitioners of the arts to develop into complex partnerships, even leading to a publication in this case. Other known cases of relationships between urban and provincial literati include that between Bakin and Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825), an Edo-born but Sendai-based female intellectual, as described by Bettina Gramlich-Oka. Similar to Bokushi’s case, in 1819 Makuzu approached Bakin to seek his help in publishing her book. They also developed an intimate relationship through correspondence; however, their contact ended within a few months without producing any tangible collaboration.\footnote{See Bettina Gramlich-Oka, \textit{Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825)} (Leiden: Brill, 2006), esp. Chapter 4.} The relationship between Tachibana Moribe (1781-1849), a \textit{kokugaku} scholar in Edo, and his disciple Yoshida Seisuke (1794-1857) in Kōzuke, has also been examined by historians but it did not involve a publication project by the provincial writer.\footnote{See Takahashi Satoshi, ‘Kinsei chōnin kazoku no shōzō’, \textit{Shisō}, No. 836 (1994): 92-102; Haga Noboru, ‘Tenpō kaikaku to Edo chōnin shakai’, in Nishiyama Matsunosuke (ed.), \textit{Edo chōnin no kenkyū}, vol. 1 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972), pp. 443-45.}

As we will see more fully later, Bakin’s letters to Bokushi give the impression that their relationship was intimate and cooperative. The same seems to be true of the relationship between Kyōzan and Bokushi. Obviously these Edo authors had a professional interest in Bokushi’s suggestion of writing a book about the snow country, and this constituted a central factor motivating their communication with Bokushi. Even so,
their intimacy in communication is surprising, especially in the case of Bakin, who was well known for his antisocial personality as well as his stubborn disapproval of money-based relationships between urban writers and provincial people.37 Bakin once pleased Bokushi by writing ‘it is only your letters that I have been collecting and binding as a book’.38

As time went by, this intimacy lessened. Or perhaps, in reality, Bakin had not trusted Bokushi from the beginning as much as he seemed to from his letters. As Takahashi points out, a letter from Bakin in 1819 to Koizumi Sōken, whom Bokushi had introduced to Bakin, contains direct criticism of Bokushi as a provider of local information. To Bakin, who was then writing bibliographical research essays, Bokushi’s information did not seem reliable or comprehensive enough to use in the book he was working on.39 Bakin told Sōken to keep these comments confidential. Bakin’s diary also reveals his honest reaction to Bokushi’s demands. For example, Bakin wrote, when he received a request for a verse from Bokushi, incorporating detailed requirements, that ‘it really irritates me as I’m so busy writing books now!’ 40 The next chapter will fully examine the complexity of the Bakin-Bokushi and Kyōzan-Bokushi relationships, centring on the publication of Hokuetsu seppu.

Meanwhile, Bokushi’s contacts with famous figures in the arts raise the question of the means by which he and other provincial art-lovers sought contact with urban literati. There is little tangible evidence concerning

38 Ibid., p. 215.
40 Takizawa Bakin, Bakin niki, vol. 1, p. 413. Also see vol. 1, p. 436 and vol. 2, p. 65.
Bokushi’s methods of making first contacts. Still, his texts indirectly suggest three means: using someone’s introduction, paying direct visits on his travels, and using published directories of artists and scholars. In other words, Bokushi’s methods combine the most conventional way of making contacts, with a method that was well established among haikai poets, and a new consequence of the development of the print media in the late Tokugawa period.

Introduction by an intermediary was of course the most effective way to make a famous figure’s acquaintance. In an 1829 letter, for example, Bokushi asked Kyōzan to pass on to kyōka master Shikatsubeno Magao (1753-1829) his request for Magao’s poems, although it is unclear whether or not Bokushi already knew Magao.41 An 1836 letter from Bokushi, on the other hand, tells a local person in Echigo that he would be happy to write a letter of introduction (soegaki) to Kyōzan and Bakin to be used on this person’s trip to Edo.42 We can sense here Bokushi’s pride in his close relationship with these two famous figures in Edo.

The provincial poets’ practice of visiting local people while travelling arose from Basho’s famous ‘aesthetic’ journey, described in Oku no hosomichi (pub. 1702), in the context of the popularization of both haikai and travel from the eighteenth century onwards. Bokushi’s father and his local haikai friends went on a Bashō-style ‘aesthetic’ journey to Dewa and Nikkō in 1775, during which they visited local haikai gurus and composed verses together.43 Bokushi’s 1796 trip to Ise and western provinces,

41 ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 283-84.
42 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 968.
discussed in Chapter One, was more significant in showing the established custom of rural poets’ visits to local and urban *haikai* gurus while travelling, including on pilgrimages. He made the acquaintance of eight *haikai* masters in Osaka and five in Kyoto on this trip.\(^{44}\)

Thanks to this increase in people’s interest in meeting with cultural experts, directories of artists and scholars (*monjin roku* or *jinmei roku*) came into existence. Such directories were first published in Kyoto as early as 1768, followed by Osaka and Edo editions from 1775 and 1815 respectively. As is clearly stated in the 1815 publication, *Edo tōji shoka jinmeiroku* (Directory of contemporary scholars, writers and artists in Edo), these directories aimed to help provincial people find and visit their preferred specialists in the three metropolises, a fact which provides compelling evidence of the maturity of provincial people’s demand for and urban professionals’ supply of cultural services in this period.\(^{45}\) It is reasonable to imagine that Bokushi used the 1815 directory of Edo scholars and writers when he visited a number of famous figures in Edo during his 1819 trip. Bōsai, Nanpo, Bunchō and Kinjō, whom Bokushi visited, were all listed in this publication.\(^{46}\)

A letter from Bakin to Bokushi in 1818 even complains about the situation of popular writers, who are surrounded by provincial visitors to Edo. Bakin wrote:

\(^{44}\) ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 762-63, 770.


\(^{46}\) Mori and Nakajima (eds), *Kinsei jinmeiroku shūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 6-8. Kyōzan is also listed here as a seal engraver (p. 4).
People with a little talent in literature often come to see me. They will soon say ‘Hey, I know Bakin very well’. Some even say to me ‘I would like to make your acquaintance on the occasion of my trip to Edo so that I will be able to talk about it to my friends upon returning home’. Those visitors treat me as if I were something in the circus.47

Elsewhere as well, Bakin expressed his annoyance on receiving a letter from a stranger without introduction by an intermediary or without observance of the proper etiquette.48

To sum up, Bokushi’s development of cultural contacts both with famous literati and with his fellow amateurs in the provinces was strongly related to general movements in the literary world in the late Tokugawa period. This was a time in which artistic and literary enthusiasts in the provinces were strongly linked with each other in terms of their leisure activities. It was also the beginning of a trend for provincial people to make vigorous approaches to urban celebrities in various fields. We will next consider the relation between the growth of Bokushi’s communication network and the development of the mail system more generally.

**Bokushi’s Use of the Mail System**

Bokushi’s correspondence with people across large distances certainly depended upon the state of the mail system of his day. Such a wide and active exchange of letters would have been impossible without reliable

---

48 Gramlich-Oka, _Thinking Like a Man_, pp. 143-46. This was when Bakin received the first letter from Tadano Makuzu in 1819.
methods of delivering private mail. Bokushi’s texts offer some limited but nevertheless significant evidence to show how letters were delivered among provincial and urban practitioners of the arts at that time. As we will see below, Bokushi used a combination of methods, relying on the haikai poets’ network, private connections based on local relationships, and commercial courier services known as hikyaku.

The haikai poets’ communication network was useful but perhaps not always reliable. There is a brief note in ‘Eisei kirokushū’ that in 1801 Bokushi received from a poet in Osaka an advertisement for a haikai contest at Izumo taisha, one of Japan’s oldest shrines, located in Izumo Province (present-day Shimane Prefecture). Bokushi then submitted verses to the contest, through the Osaka poet, spending approximately half a ryō, but later regretfully wrote that ‘I have not heard anything since then’. This episode suggests, on the one hand, how widely and eagerly information about major haikai events was circulated through the poets’ network, but, on the other hand, that the poets’ network might not always have been a reliable channel of communication.

Yaba’s study illuminates the functioning of and the problems in haikai poets’ correspondence. Yaba examined a large number of letters exchanged among haikai poets, including Bokushi, and identified the actual ways in which they were passed through the haikai network. According to his research, letter-exchange relied largely on the personal networks of leading poets. Each such poet was effectively the nexus of a web. For example, Yaba identified four poets who passed Bokushi’s letters to other

---

49 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 34-35.
poets within their personal networks. Bokushi also helped distant poets develop their communication networks by answering enquiries or introducing them to others from among his own correspondents. Unlike commercial courier services, however, mail sent by means of this kind of amateur network on a goodwill basis could take months to reach the addressee. There was also the possibility that some link in the transmission of letters might not function because of long-term absence from home, sickness, death or laziness.

Secondly, the hometown connection was a significant factor when Bokushi sent letters to Edo writers, especially Bakin and Kyōzan. Bokushi had a close and longstanding Shiozawa friend, Chūbei, who had married into a sock shop in Edo, who played an important role in connecting him with his correspondents. Being in Edo, Chūbei delivered almost all the letters from Bokushi to Bakin and Kyōzan until around 1830, as shown in Tables 5.3 and 5.4. Replies from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi were passed on to Chūbei. He also conveyed seasonal gifts from Bokushi, and information from Echigo (for example, about an earthquake), and conveyed Bokushi’s feelings on certain matters: for example, Bokushi’s concern about receiving no reply to a letter to Bakin for a long period.

It is not clear whether Chūbei’s business had a connection with transport between Echigo and Edo, or whether he just personally acted as an agent for Bokushi, and possibly other people in Shiozawa. But it is certain

50 Yaba, Shinano no Issa, pp. 162-65.
51 Chūbei became hearing-impaired in 1829, according to Bakin’s diary. This may have caused him to stop directly visiting Bakin and Kyōzan. See Takizawa Bakin, Bakin nikki, vol. 2, p. 238.
52 See, for example, ibid., vol. 1, pp. 37, 436, 457; ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 223.
that he maintained a close link with his hometown. The relationship between Bokushi and Chūbei seems to have stemmed largely from their personal friendship, centring on the hometown bond, as well as their common values and similar personality. Bokushi says Chūbei was a person of ‘thorough integrity’. He also had a high regard for the lifestyle of Chūbei, who enjoyed the arts on top of his diligent work for the family business.\(^{53}\) At the same time, however, their relationship was mutually beneficial. Chūbei provided Bokushi with accommodation in Edo as well as handling his mail. In return, Bokushi helped Chūbei buy paddy fields and manage his landholdings in their hometown. In 1816, Bokushi received twenty-five \(\text{ryō}\) from Chūbei, and bought three blocks of land for him,\(^{54}\) although it is not clear how such purchases and land management were allowed for and handled in terms of land registration and taxation. In short, these old friends played the role of local agent for each other when requested to do so.

Thirdly, Bokushi took great advantage of the development of commercial courier services between Edo and Shiozawa. One traditional means of mail delivery was called ‘\(\text{kōbin}\)’ (lit. mail by luck): people asked ordinary travellers going from their local area to other places to deliver their mail. Presumably this was still a popular practice among many people in the cities and countryside; however, the frequency of correspondence between Bokushi and Bakin in 1818 as seen below suggests the use of more reliable and regular services than ‘\(\text{kōbin}\)’. The substitutes for ‘\(\text{kōbin}\)’ in this case were presumably couriers for the \(\text{chijimi}\) business (\(\text{chijimi bikyaku}\))

\(^{53}\) ‘Yonabegusa’, in SBZ1, pp. 482-83.
\(^{54}\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 60.
and, in a later period, regular mail couriers (jō hikyaku). Although regular mail courier services for private use first became available between Edo and Osaka in the early seventeenth century, with a regular departure three times a month from each terminal, other areas had to wait for another century or more. It is understood that regular services reached Takasaki in Kōzuke Province in 1773, and then extended to Kashiwazaki in Echigo in 1817, and to other Echigo towns in 1832.\(^{55}\)

Before the extension of regular courier services between Edo and Echigo, however, chijimi couriers ran between the chijimi markets in Uonuma and Edo. A document in 1819, for instance, indicates the existence of eleven chijimi couriers in Tōkamachi.\(^ {56}\) A similar number can be presumed for Ojiya, and probably a smaller number for Horinouchi, and possibly for Shiozawa too. It is reasonable to think that Bokushi used these courier services, and was able to take it for granted that letters and parcels would be delivered to Edo without major problems.

Bokushi’s collections of letters from Bakin and Kyōzan, as well as Bakin’s diary, contain very useful information about letter-writing and mail delivery between rural and urban literati in the early nineteenth century. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 below summarize some of the correspondence between Bokushi and Bakin from 1818 to 1834, and between Bokushi and Kyōzan from 1829 to 1834, respectively.


\(^{56}\) Tōkamachishi-shi hensan iinkai (ed.), Tōkamachishi-shi shiryōhen, vol. 5 (Tōkamachi, Niigata: Tōkamachi shiyakusho, 1993), pp. 359-66. This 1819 document is a memorandum of understanding between local hikyaku contractors and chijimi traders agreeing that they would not accept a certain business proposal from an Edo-based major hikyaku house. This strongly indicates that the Edo-centred information network extended by this stage to provincial towns in terms of business structure as well as operations.
Table 5.3: Correspondence between Bokushi (Shiozawa) and Bakin (Edo), 1818-34 (only those of which dates of writing and delivery are clear)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date of letter from Bokushi (X)</th>
<th>Date of delivery to Bakin (Y) [and person who delivered it]</th>
<th>Period between (X) and (Y)</th>
<th>Date of reply by Bakin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1818/7/5</td>
<td>7/26 [unknown]</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>7/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1818/8/25</td>
<td>9/5 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>9 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1818/10/15</td>
<td>10/22 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>10/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1818/10/28</td>
<td>11/7 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>8 days</td>
<td>11/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1818/11/25</td>
<td>12/15 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>19 days</td>
<td>12/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1829/5/1</td>
<td>6/5 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>33 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1831/1/12</td>
<td>2/1 [a messenger from Echigoya]</td>
<td>18 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1833/5/3-4</td>
<td>6/18 [courier Jinzō from Echigo]</td>
<td>43 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1834/9/12</td>
<td>11/16 [a messenger from Chūbei]</td>
<td>63 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dates are given as year/month/date.

Data for A to E are compiled from ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 193-274. Data for F to I are compiled from Takizawa Bakin, Bakin nikki, 4 vols.

Table 5.4: Correspondence between Bokushi (Shiozawa) and Kyōzan (Edo), 1829-34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date of letter from Bokushi (X)</th>
<th>Date of delivery to Kyōzan (Y) [and person who delivered it]</th>
<th>Period between (X) and (Y)</th>
<th>Date of reply by Kyōzan</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1829/9/2, 9/9</td>
<td>9/18 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>12 days</td>
<td>9/18, 9/19, 9/20</td>
<td>Bokushi received this reply from Kyōzan on 9/29 (in 9 days).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1829/10/9</td>
<td>10/17 [unknown]</td>
<td>8 days</td>
<td>10/19, 10/21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1829/10 [11?]2/2</td>
<td>11/22 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1830/4/2</td>
<td>4/16 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>4/20, 4/23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1831/9/24</td>
<td>10/9 [Chūbei]</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1833/3/2</td>
<td>3/19 [a courier]</td>
<td>17 days</td>
<td>3/24</td>
<td>Bokushi’s parcel weighed 850 monme (3.19 kg) and cost 350 mon to send.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1833/5/22</td>
<td>6/19 [a courier]</td>
<td>26 days</td>
<td>6/21</td>
<td>The courier left for Echigo on 6/22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1834/11/18</td>
<td>12/16 [a courier]</td>
<td>27 days</td>
<td>12/16, 12/17</td>
<td>Bokushi received this reply from Kyozan on 1835/1/2 (in 15 days).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dates are given as year/month/date.
Compiled from ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 275-356.

These data reveal that mail was delivered within a quite short period of time. As noted in Chapter One, the route between Edo and Shiozawa was 216 kilometres in distance, including a long mountain ridge as high as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1835/1/9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>The courier departed Echigo on 1/13. Reply was requested by 1/24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1835/2/17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Reply was requested by 3/2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>1835/8/24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1835/9/15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Reply was requested before the courier returned to Echigo the next day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1835/9/24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Bokushi received this reply from Kyōzan on 10/10 (in 14 days).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1835/10/14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>The courier departed Echigo on 10/1. These three replies were sent together after 10/26. Courier Sannosuke departed Echigo on 10/10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>1835/10/12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1835/11/18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>The courier was delayed due to heavy snowfalls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1/22, 1/23, 1/26</td>
<td>The courier departed Echigo on 1/10, and collected the reply on 1/27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1836/2/21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2/30</td>
<td>The courier departed Ojiya on 2/20, collected the reply on 3/4 and left for Echigo on 3/5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>average</td>
<td>15.4 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1,400 metres above sea level. In the fastest case, however, it took only seven days from the date of Bokushi’s letter to the date of delivery to Bakin (Case C in Table 5.3). It can therefore be presumed that couriers travelled from Shiozawa to Edo in five to seven days if weather and other conditions allowed. (Of course, there might have been a gap of at least one day between the date of the letter and the time of the courier’s collection. Delivery at the destination might also have taken some time after the courier’s arrival.) A sentence in Hokuetsu seppu confirms the relatively short time normally required for mail delivery: ‘A strong runner can make the trip [between Shiozawa and Edo] in four days during the snow-free season’.57 On the other hand, some letters reached Bakin more than a month after Bokushi had written (Cases F, H and I in Table 5.3). These may be instances in which the letters were not urgent, as the Bakin-Bokushi book project was already over at that time, as we will see later. Nevertheless, on average in normal cases, Bokushi’s letters reached his correspondents in Edo within thirteen to fifteen days of the date of writing. As comparison, Kobayashi Issa’s diary during the period 1814-18 shows that letters from Edo reached his home in Shinano Province, 235 kilometres away, within twenty-one to thirty days of the date of writing.58


58 Four records confirming dates of writing letters by Edo poets and dates of their delivery to Issa are available: an 1814/2/9 letter reached Issa on 3/5 (taking 26 days), an 1814/3/1 letter arrived on 3/27 (27 days), an 1815/5/4 letter arrived on 5/25 (21 days), an 1817/12/2 letter arrived on 1818/1/1 (30 days). See [Kobayashi] Issa (annotated by Maruyama Kazuhiko), Shichiban nikki, vol. 2 (Iwanami shoten, 2003), pp. 34, 38, 147-48, 368.
Winter snowfalls naturally affected communication between Echigo and Edo and other places. It is nonetheless striking that courier services were available even in mid-winter, connecting Shiozawa and Edo in ten to twenty days. For example, in Case J in Table 5.4, the courier departed from Echigo carrying Bokushi’s letter on the thirteenth day of the first month in 1835, which was 10 February in the Gregorian calendar, normally a time of the heaviest snowfalls in the region. After nine days, the courier delivered Bokushi’s letter to Kyōzan. The courier prompted Kyōzan to write a reply quickly as he was scheduled to run back to Echigo two days later. In the case of the letter listed as Case R in Table 5.4, Kyōzan recorded a courier’s report that the letter had been delayed due to heavy snowfalls on the way from Echigo. Even though delayed, this letter reached Kyōzan within twenty days. (See also Cases E and G in Table 5.3 and Cases I, K, S and T in Tables 5.4).

Such speed was not unique to correspondence between Echigo and Edo. Okada Gyokuzan in Osaka wrote to Bokushi, probably in 1807, that ‘your letter dated the ninth day of the first month arrived here on the third day of the second month’.59 This means that delivery took twenty-four days, from 15 February to 11 March in the Gregorian calendar. Contrary to the image of total isolation of Bokushi’s region in winter because of snow, the delivery of these letters proves that information channels remained open at least to well-placed people like Bokushi. The continuation of courier services in winter also indicates people’s strong desire for communication.

---

throughout the year, a desire that provided the economic basis for the
courier services.

The cost of mail services was another important factor that could
either encourage or hinder people’s communication across distance. There
is little information about mail delivery fees in Bokushi’s texts; however,
we can infer from the following that it was reasonably inexpensive. A
letter from Kyōzan in 1833 (Case G in Table 5.4) mentions that a large
parcel previously sent to him by Bokushi weighed 850 monme (3.19
kilograms) and cost 350 mon to send. As for small items, an entry in
Bakin’s diary in 1832 mentions ‘forty-eight mon for the delivery of a small
packet’ to Bokushi.60 Kobayashi Issa also recorded the cost of sending a
letter from Shinano to Edo at forty-eight mon, and a large parcel from Edo
to Shinano at 400 mon in 1814.61 Given that the price of a bowl of soba
noodles ranged from sixteen mon to thirty-two mon, or eel-and-rice
(unagimeshi) from 100 to 200 mon in Edo,62 such fees would have been
quite affordable for people like Bokushi, or even for less privileged
customers. These modest charges for mail delivery again strongly suggest
that a considerable quantity of mail was exchanged between Edo and
provinces like Echigo. Bakin’s diary also reveals the existence of a
‘reply-paid’ system. He wrote that when he sent Bokushi two parcels, one
large and one small, on 1832/2/21, he did not pay for the large one as it

60 Takizawa Bakin, Bakin nikki, vol. 3, p. 41.
62 Kitagawa Morisada (annotated by Usami Hideki), Kinsei fuzoku-shi:
consisted of Bokushi’s belongings (perhaps his pictures); the charge was ‘to be paid in Echigo’.  

All the information above shows that by 1820 Bokushi and other well-placed people in his region had access to a relatively good system of mail delivery, at least to Edo. They increasingly enjoyed exchanging mail with people in the metropolis and other places, thanks to the development of this reliable and comparatively inexpensive system. There was no report by Bokushi, Bakin or Kyōzan of disappearance of or damage to mail, which they must have especially feared when sending and receiving manuscripts and pictures for the book that later became Hokuetsu seppu. Next, we will examine the letter-writing activities of these three figures in terms, first, of their everyday habits of writing and second, of the contents of their letters.

**Letter-Writing Habits — Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan**

Letters to Bokushi from Bakin and Kyōzan provide information about how frequently they corresponded and how much they wrote. Table 5.5 below shows the number of letters exchanged between Bokushi and Bakin, as far as we can confirm.

---

64 ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’ contains seven letters which Bokushi claimed that he received from Bakin in the year of 1818 alone, but the last letter is dated ‘the intercalary (urū) eighth month’, which must be of 1824. And it is evident from a certain letter that one letter which should be dated 1818/7/2 is not included in this compilation. See ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 210, 271.
Table 5.5: Number of letters exchanged between Bokushi and Bakin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bokushi to Bakin</th>
<th>Bakin to Bokushi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>at least 1</td>
<td>at least 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: data for 1818 and 1824 are compiled from ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 196-271; data for 1827-34 are taken from Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, pp. 109-11, based on a study of Bakin’s diary.

These data suggest two different patterns of communication between literati across distance: on the one hand, a very frequent exchange of letters driven by a particular motive, and on the other, a lower level of quite normal communications, such as seasonal greetings. As will be examined more closely in Chapter Six, the letters in 1818 — eight from Bokushi and seven from Bakin — were exchanged during the period of their initial enthusiasm for publishing a book about the snow country, starting with a proposal from Bokushi, which was followed by Bakin’s acceptance and suggestions about how to proceed towards publication. At least once, Bokushi was so anxious for Bakin’s reply that he asked his friend Chūbei to go and press him.65 A similar frequency of exchange can be seen in the letters between Bokushi and Kyōzan in 1835. Bokushi sent nine letters in that year, while Kyōzan replied seven times (see Table 5.4 above). Taking into account various factors in mail delivery such as couriers’ travel time, the limited mail schedule and climatic conditions, an exchange of fifteen or sixteen

---

65 Ibid., p. 220.
letters in a year between Edo and Echigo should be regarded as an extraordinary level of communication in this period of history.

Meanwhile, after the proposed collaboration between Bokushi and Bakin was dropped in 1830, their correspondence was reduced to an exchange of two to three letters a year. Bakin’s diary suggests that Bokushi’s mail to Bakin after 1830 centred on such things as New Year greetings accompanied by some money (toshidama; usually two shu), a request for Bakin’s poems or newly published books, and seasonal gifts of local products.\textsuperscript{66} Such mail probably represents ordinary correspondence from provincial literati to urban writers or artists. There were sudden increases in the number of letters from Bokushi to Bakin in 1829 – to seven letters – and in 1834 – to six letters. I will offer my interpretation of this fact in Chapter Six in relation to the publication of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}.

The length of letters from Bakin to Bokushi and from Kyōzan to Bokushi is impressive for modern readers. For example, six extant letters written by Bakin to Bokushi in 1818 contain more than 80,000 characters in total. Even though these letters were largely written in connection with the book project, this bulk of material certainly indicates that a great amount of information was exchanged. Sometimes Bakin and Kyōzan enclosed separate pieces of writing, including research essays. For example, Bokushi’s collection of letters from Bakin contains Bakin’s reports entitled ‘How to Breed Canaries’ and ‘My View on Kusunoki Masashige’s Family Precepts’.\textsuperscript{67} At least some of Bokushi’s letters to Bakin also seem to have

\textsuperscript{67} ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 260-68, 270-71, respectively. Some letters between Bakin and Tadano Makuzu were also very long and
been very long. Bakin wrote in his diary on one occasion that ‘in the evening, I read the two letters from Bokushi, but his lengthy letters took me a long time’. Bakin also noted how much time it took to produce such long letters. He wrote to Bokushi, for example, ‘[Chūbei] came and passed on your letter to me around [ten o’clock] this morning. Then I started writing this reply. … Now I am finishing writing this at [five o’clock]’. Another letter indicates that Bakin spent eight hours writing one reply to Bokushi.

Bokushi’s own texts lack this kind of concrete information about the time spent on letter-writing, but his heavy commitment to writing letters certainly must have been time-consuming. If Bakin, a professional author with many writing commitments, spent several hours on one letter, then Bokushi, too, must have spent much time and energy on letters to this important correspondent. Kyōzan repeatedly wrote to Bokushi that he was impressed by Bokushi’s letters in terms of their length and meticulous description of a variety of things. Also noteworthy in letters from Kyōzan to Bokushi is that Kyōzan often enclosed two or three letters in one envelope, which means he continued with his writing over a few days if he had extra time for some reason; for example, if a courier did not come to pick up his letters as scheduled. (See Table 5.4 above, Cases A, B, D, I, N, S, T and U.) This indicates Kyōzan’s strong interest in writing letters to

---

are considered to be essays rather than normal letters. See Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man*, pp. 147, 158-59.

68 Takizawa Bakin, *Bakin Nikki*, vol. 4, p. 249.

69 ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 209. I have converted the times (originally ‘yon toki sugi’ and ‘saruo no koku’) into the modern system, taking into account the season of the date (5/17) of the letter.

70 Ibid., p. 219.
Bokushi, at least in the period when they were discussing publication of a book.

Contents of Letters — Bokushi and His Correspondents

The actual content of letters exchanged between Bokushi and his urban and provincial correspondents is important not only in establishing the range of common interests among them, but also to ascertain their motives for communicating with each other, sometimes across large distances. In this section, I exclude information and discussion related to Hokuetsu seppu and other publication projects, which are examined in Chapter Six, in order to focus on the more standard topics in the letters exchanged among Bokushi and his correspondents.

Firstly, it is clear that requests for or exchange of artistic and literary work were important motives for communication among such practitioners of the arts. The items exchanged increasingly came to include made-to-order prints, called surimono, including prints of work by both provincial and urban artists. This point is significant in indicating the increasing association between provincial literati and the print media. Because of their growing familiarity with the print media, provincial practitioners of the arts were able to progress from being simply consumers of other people’s work to producing their own artistic work, even if it was only a humble one-page print. According to a letter from Kyōzan to Bokushi in 1829, Bokushi had asked Kyōzan to write a poem on a picture produced by Bokushi, which would then be included in a collage print to commemorate Bokushi’s sixty-first birthday (kanreki), a traditional
milestone in life.\textsuperscript{71} The production of this birthday collage was a great project that allowed Bokushi to highlight the artistic network he had built up over many years. An extant copy of the print shows that Bokushi obtained inscriptions or pictures from eleven literati including Bakin, Ikku, Ishikawa Masamochi, Tani Bunchō, Teisai Hokuba and Ōnishi Chinnen (1792-1851) — strangely, though, Kyōzan’s work is not found in the print (see Figure 5.8 below).\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{Figure 5.8: Bokushi’s ‘surimono’ (one-page personal print)}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Left: Bokushi’s \textit{kanreki} (61st birthday celebration) collage print, 1830
    \begin{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
  \item Below: \textit{Nenga} (New Year’s greeting) print, 1842
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Source: Suzuki Bokushi kinenkan kaikan jushūnen kinen jimukyoku (ed.), \textit{Bokushi to sono shūhen}, p. 17.
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{71} ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 283.
\textsuperscript{72} Takahashi, \textit{Zayū no Bokushi}, pp. 106-12.
Bokushi also created his own prints for New Year’s greetings in 1830, 1832 and 1842 (see Figure 5.8 above) at least,\(^{73}\) and for an announcement of the forthcoming publication of *Hokuetsu seppu*, Part II in 1842.\(^{74}\) In addition, Kyōzan sent Bokushi some prints made by Edo literati, including a group of *kyōka*-poets and the daimyo of Chōshū domain.\(^{75}\) According to Yaba’s study, the habit of making these prints emerged along with the exchange of mail among *haikai* poets from the late eighteenth century onwards, becoming particularly fashionable in the nineteenth century. Untai, Bokushi’s aforementioned fellow collector, amassed more than one thousand copies of such prints.\(^{76}\) As Yaba suggests, these cases show that by the early nineteenth century, the printing of one’s own artwork and texts was no longer the exclusive preserve of celebrities, but had become a realizable project even for many provincial art-enthusiasts. Yaba reproduces an invoice issued by a Kyoto publisher in the 1820s to a provincial poet for the production cost of a one-page print with illustration: ‘twenty-five *monme* six *bu* in silver for seventy copies’.\(^{77}\) The cost per copy in this case was approximately thirty-seven *mon*, a modest amount for a member of the rural elite at this time.

Information about other members of artistic circles was vigorously exchanged among Bokushi and his correspondents, often as part of the process of collecting ‘holographs’ and prints. Letters from and to Bokushi

\(^{73}\) See ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 280, 301, and ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 981. In addition, Bokushi may have produced a print in 1819, as a letter from Bakin in 1818 mentions Bokushi’s draft of a print. ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 253.

\(^{74}\) ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 982.

\(^{75}\) ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 292-93, 309.

\(^{76}\) Yaba, *Shokan ni yoru kinsei-kōki haikai no kenkyū*, p. 49.

\(^{77}\) Ibid., p. 52.
reveal how rural practitioners of the arts obtained information about members of urban literary circles, consequently narrowing the psychological gap between themselves and the central arena of literature. Because of his communication network, Bokushi was located at one nexus of the information flow from the centre to the peripheries and back. Letters from Kyōzan and Bakin, for example, provided Bokushi with information about them and other central figures in literature. Bokushi’s letters to his fellow provincial literati again conveyed such information, which likely then spread further to other people in the provinces. For example, an 1836 letter from Bokushi to an intellectual in Echigo contains a paragraph about recent circumstances in the lives of Bakin and Kyōzan, including the death of Bakin’s son and, by contrast, the promotion of Kyōzan’s daughters to be concubines of the daimyo of Chōshū.78

Equally noteworthy was the exchange of social and political news. The topics that were covered in letters from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi include: climate and natural phenomena (rain, snowfalls, hail, comets), rice crops (harvest, prices), disasters (fires, earthquakes), diseases (influenza, smallpox), events in the town (annual festivals, special temple exhibitions of religious treasures, the arrival of envoys from the Kingdom of the Ryūkyūs to the shogun, changes in the bakufu administration), notable incidents (civil crimes, punishment of daimyo houses) as well as trends and incidents in the publishing market. These news items were then relayed by Bokushi to other correspondents. An example is the news of a political scandal known as the Sengoku Incident in 1835. In his letter dated 1835/9/24, Kyōzan

---

78 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 967.
first wrote to Bokushi about this matter of a daimyo house succession. Bokushi then wrote about the development of the associated political scandal in a letter to a friend in Echigo dated 1836/3/12, presuming that person already knew of the incident. A far more detailed report from Kyōzan to Bokushi about a political incident is found in a letter of 1836/5/20, in which Kyōzan wrote all the details of a dispute between two daimyo houses that occurred at a post-station near Edo, including a full copy of an official document submitted by one of the daimyo houses to the bakufu councillor in charge, and a copy of the sentence passed by the bakufu court. The route by which such information had leaked to Kyōzan is unclear, but is probably related to his tie with the Chōshū han through his daughters. At any rate, we can presume that this information was also relayed to others by Bokushi through the networks of communication in artistic circles, although the available sources provide no direct evidence.

Such transmission of information from Kyōzan to Bokushi, then to other provincial people, indicates the existence of a common ground of knowledge and interest among the urban and rural literati as well as a certain information gap that could be filled by the correspondence. Kyōzan undoubtedly thought that current affairs in the samurai world at the political centre would interest Bokushi and his fellow elite provincials. Similarly, Bakin took for granted Bokushi’s basic knowledge of the world

80 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 968.
of the urban literati: for instance, when Bakin criticised the commercialization of exhibitions (shogakai) of the work of famous writers in Edo, he assumed that Bokushi was familiar with the trend. Of course, such assumptions about Bokushi’s range of interests by Kyōzan and Bakin had been prompted by Bokushi’s previous letters.

Personal matters were naturally included in these communications. It is remarkable, however, just how much personal information does appear in letters between Bokushi and Bakin, and between Bokushi and Kyōzan, despite the social gap between them as a rural amateur writer on the one hand, and popular urban authors on the other. In fact, the intensity of communication of personal matters in these letters is much greater than in Bokushi’s correspondence with other provincial literati, as far as the available sources show. It is unclear what drove Bakin and Kyōzan to write so much about personal matters to Bokushi. Writing a book about the snow country continued to be a motive for the communication in both cases, but that does not really explain why so much personal news was also exchanged. It is conceivable, however, that Bokushi’s letters to these illustrious men appeared pleasingly modest and skilful in terms of content and attitude, and thus were flattering to the recipients. Even Bakin, whose antisocial and stubborn personality was well known, repeatedly said in his letters that he wrote everything frankly and honestly because he found Bokushi to be a trustworthy person.

83 Much personal information was also exchanged in correspondence between Bakin and Tadano Makuzu. See Gramlich-Oka, Thinking Like a Man, pp. 151-55.
A central topic in the personal communication between Bokushi and Bakin or Kyōzan was their families and households. Their letters refer to their family histories (origin, ancestors), circumstances in family life (children, marriages, divorces, diseases), and issues in household management (building houses, maintenance, various costs). Bokushi and Bakin, especially, had a strong commonality of interest in these issues, and, accordingly, the correspondence between them displays a great deal of intimacy. One good example is their discussions of the marriages of their children.\(^{85}\) After Bakin had written that he wanted his son to marry a good wife, and had sought Bokushi’s help in the search, Bokushi suggested the possibility that the widow of his deceased son might marry into the Takizawa family. Bakin politely rejected the idea because of the widow’s age. However, Bakin then more seriously consulted Bokushi about the remarriage of his eldest daughter, whose first and second husbands had been divorced by her (actually by Bakin) because of their misconduct. While writing about what had happened to his family through the divorces, Bakin asked Bokushi to introduce a good candidate as the daughter’s new spouse, providing details of the ideal partner, including preferred age and occupational skills, as well as information about the expected financial situation and living conditions of the couple after marriage. Bokushi sent a positive reply very quickly,\(^{86}\) although his intervention in this issue turned out not to be successful in the end.\(^{87}\)

\(^{85}\) Ibid., pp. 220, 235-38.  
\(^{86}\) Ibid., p. 253.  
\(^{87}\) Bakin’s daughter remarried six years after this letter. See Asō Isoji, *Takizawa Bakin* (Yoshikawa köbunkan, 1959), p. 43.
In his written communications, Bokushi apparently crossed the boundaries which had normally hindered ordinary rural people from contacting others across distance or beyond their own social status. To conclude this chapter, I highlight three main factors that enabled him to build the wide and diverse communication network examined above, and also point to the effect of his extended communication.

Firstly, it is obvious that Bokushi was fortunate to live in a period of drastic change in the patterns of communication between people who lived at a distance from each other. His voluminous collection of letters and pieces of artistic work as well as his address books are all testimony to his active involvement in that great social transformation. Bokushi’s own writings and his collection of letters from other people clearly reveal people’s excitement at being connected to the growing network of communication in the late Tokugawa period. The popularization of haikai discussed in the previous chapter provided a considerable momentum for this development. Along with people’s increasing desire to communicate with others across distance, the mail system was also becoming more convenient, reliable and affordable for provincial residents. In addition to conventional methods of ensuring the delivery of mail, such as relying on travellers and merchants, even rural people, if they were well placed socially and geographically, came to be able to use haikai poets’ networks and, later, commercial courier services to send letters across distance. For local people in Shiozawa, Bokushi himself was a conspicuous nexus in the web of
such communication, which now, they knew, potentially extended throughout Japan.

In addition, it is evident that social boundaries were loosening, and circles of literary and artistic practitioners had become less exclusive too. Bokushi’s collection of New Year’s cards constitute good evidence. They derived from a range of people: as he wrote in 1836, from a high-ranking daimyo, to eminent priests, to other classes of people in many provinces.88 We have seen that Bokushi also had wide-ranging contact with many practitioners of the arts in a number of genres. In the name of ふゆう (aesthetics), many people had extended their interest into a variety of genres, perhaps while having haikai poetry as a common skill. Nor did Bokushi adhere to one teacher or faction in haikai or painting. Both his collection of literary and artistic works and his group of correspondents represent a great mixture. His own practice of the arts was similarly eclectic, probably because of the popularization of the arts in general, along with the development of communication networks.

Bokushi’s personal attributes should be considered as another key factor in his building of such a wide and diverse communication network. The literacy and knowledge of the arts he had acquired since childhood gave him the fundamental ability to communicate with educated people anywhere. Skills in drawing and Chinese poetry on top of haikai composition probably increased his value to others as a correspondent. It can also be presumed that Bokushi’s letter-writing skills were good enough to nurture his long-distance friendships, especially with famous people or those of a

88 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 967.
higher social status than he was. Letters from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi give the impression that Bokushi’s letters had made them comfortable enough to write about such private matters as family history, household business and issues relating to their children. As we will see more fully in the next chapter, Bakin’s letters as well as Kyōzan’s say in places, ‘This is for your eyes only’. 89

The fact that Bokushi’s family culture was appreciative of the arts formed another important foundation of his communication network. In this respect, Bokushi owed much to his father. Bokushi’s personal idiosyncrasies perhaps constitute a significant factor too. His tireless devotion to building a network of correspondents and to collecting artistic works over several decades is reminiscent of some of his business practices; his assiduousness and industry in correspondence as well seem to have been extraordinary among the provincial elite, even in a period of such rapid development in communications.

However, it is also important to point out that Bokushi’s case suggests strongly that such ‘aesthetic networks’ were not separate from various ‘worldly’ matters. Increase in economic ties between Bokushi’s region and other areas, especially the metropolis of Edo, contributed to the infrastructural development of communication such as courier services. Economic benefit was also a factor in connecting urban and rural practitioners of the arts in at least some cases. Even though the flow of people, commodities, money and information intensified, Bokushi’s correspondence network was apparently still affected by the geographic

location of his region. Unlike in the modern postal system, the areas that *hikyaku* networks covered were still limited. The spread of Bokushi’s correspondents is amazing, but the quantitative distribution of letters and correspondents nevertheless clearly indicates the geographic constraints of his network.

Bokushi’s overt interest in the political or social status of his correspondents provides other evidence of the inseparability of ‘aesthetic networks’ and the ‘worldly’ order. Thus I question Eiko Ikegami’s emphasis on freedom of communication within ‘aesthetic networks’. Ikegami writes that ‘aesthetic sociability provided a method for creating and sustaining civility distinct from the hierarchical order of the Tokugawa shogunate’. However, even within his own *haikai* circle, Bokushi acknowledged the status of samurai by attaching ‘*kō*’ (lit. ‘official’) to their names. For priests, he used ‘*zenji*’ (‘zen master’), ‘*rōshi*’ (‘teacher’) or other titles, while fellow commoner poets were addressed as ‘*shi*’ if they were roughly equal to Bokushi in age and status, ‘*kun*’ in case of poets younger than him, ‘*ō*’ in the case of elderly poets, or by other terms. ‘*Sensei*’ was also used to show respect for famous or intellectual figures.

Bakin actually censured a fellow urban writer younger than him for calling him not ‘*sensei*’ but ‘*shi*’ in a previous letter to Bakin.

Thus I argue that Bokushi’s extended communication probably did not remove barriers in terms of people’s consciousness of social groupings.

A liberalization of the terms of meeting and communicating with people

---

91 See ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, pp. 668-822.
from different groups did not necessarily lead to the weakening of the boundaries separating those groups. It may rather have confirmed these boundaries in people’s minds. As Bokushi was developing his contacts with urban practitioners of the arts, he may have had the ambivalent feeling that he was almost included in the salon of the urban literati, but never quite included. Paradoxically, communication with someone of a different status might also in turn have made a conceptual boundary seem like a real hurdle. Activities such as letter-correspondence and exchange of artistic and literary works certainly placed Bokushi closer to the ‘centre’; however, such opportunities perhaps also led him to realize more acutely his position ‘off centre’. The ‘periphery’ cannot consciously position itself until it relates itself to the ‘centre’.

A similar point should be made about Bokushi’s geographic consciousness and his desire to publish a book about his region for a readership across Japan. Access to the central arena of literature through his correspondence with urban literati probably evoked or strengthened his awareness of the characteristics of his snowy region in the context of current mainstream literature, as we will see in the next chapter. Despite Echigo’s geographical distance and climatic difference from Edo, the province was now located at the periphery of the Edo-centred cultural and economic sphere. That fact directed people’s attention to Echigo’s natural and ethnological differences from the centre. Even more than Bokushi, urban authors were aware of the potential value of the region as a literary object. The next chapter will examine how Bokushi and the urban authors with whom he associated responded to such cultural trends, and in practice...
published a book about the snow country. In the process of producing the book, Bokushi’s situation once again reveals, I argue, a paradox: collaboration between him and Kyōzan, or between the literati of ‘periphery’ and ‘centre’, on the one hand drew them together, but on the other hand enabled them to present a distinctive ‘peripheral’ region to a ‘central’ audience.
Chapter Six

**Publishing *Hokuetsu Seppu***

**Bokushi and His Urban Collaborators**

The development of print culture is a significant feature of early modern Japanese history. Peter Kornicki writes, for example, that ‘Print culture in the Tokugawa period matured rapidly into a phenomenon with all the complexity and variety that is associated with only the most advanced Western countries before modern times’. In the three metropolises — Edo, Osaka and Kyoto — there was remarkable growth in the numbers of publishing houses, distributors, authors and readers as well as the range and amount of printed materials available. The provinces also began to participate in print culture in the late Tokugawa period. The involvement of the ‘rural’ in print culture can be divided into several phases: first, provincial people began to consume books and other types of printed materials; second, bookshops and publishers emerged in provincial towns; third, there was a growth of interest in rural places and cultures as literary topics; and, fourth, provincial practitioners of the arts began to participate in publication.

Bokushi exemplifies such participation of the provincial literati in print culture. He developed a clear desire to publish a book about his region

---

Chapter Six: Publishing Hokuetsu seppu

as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite the difficulties posed by his rural location. He wrote in 1807, ‘I want to publish a book about our life here in the snow so as to make our life known around the country together with my name’. Bokushi eventually achieved the rare distinction among provincial amateur writers of publishing a book in Edo aimed at urban readers. Part I (shohen) of Hokuetsu seppu appeared in three volumes in 1837 and Part II (nihen) in four volumes in 1842 (see Figure 6.1). The work as a whole is chiefly significant as a leading example of how the ‘rural’ as a theme came to be inserted into the central arena of print culture, and how a rural writer was able to publish in the metropolis.

Bokushi’s experience was also remarkable in terms of the process of his negotiations with urban authors over this publication. The realization of his book project involved as many as five illustrious urban writers and artists over a period as long as four decades. They were: Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), one of the most famous authors of popular literature in Edo; Okada Gyokuzan (1733?-1808?), a popular illustrator of picture books in Osaka; Suzuki Fuyō (1749-1816), a famous painter in the Chinese style in Edo; Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), a leading writer of popular literature in Edo; and, finally, Santō Kyōzan (1770-1858), Kyōden’s younger brother, another best-selling author in Edo and, eventually, as I will argue, co-author with Bokushi of Hokuetsu seppu. Through this book project, moreover,

Bokushi happened to become involved in the well-known rivalry and feud between Bakin and the Santō brothers.⁵

This chapter examines Bokushi’s experience in publishing *Hokuetsu seppu*, in terms of my central concern with the ways in which he crossed the boundaries separating different social frameworks in the late Tokugawa period. Writing and publishing books had been intrinsically part of urban culture, with some exception in the activities of religious institutions; however, social and cultural developments in Bokushi’s day meant that a rural amateur writer and an urban professional writer could, under certain circumstances, work together across distance, and produce a successful publication in Edo. The chapter aims to reveal how such an urban-rural collaboration came into existence and how it actually worked in practice.

I will firstly identify the historical context in which Bokushi took up this publication project, and then analyse his negotiations with the urban authors in question. Finally, and most extensively, I will examine the process of publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* in order to assess what actual role Bokushi played. This discussion will show the extent to which at least one member of the provincial literati was able to engage with print culture in this period. It will also demonstrate that Bokushi’s experience in publishing *Hokuetsu seppu* was built on a complex mixture of social and cultural developments, human factors and unforeseen events.

Figure 6.1: *Hokuetsu seppu*

First print: Part I, 1837 – the three books on the upper left; Part II, 1842 – the four books on the upper right and bottom


**The Development of Bokushi’s Literary Interest in His Region**

The development of Bokushi’s interest in writing about his region is related to the quite complex literary environment that surrounded rural practitioners of the arts in his day. As discussed in Chapter Four, Bokushi had been an active *haikai* poet from 1785 onwards. Around 1797, however, he sent an enquiry to the popular author Kyōden about the possibility of publishing a book of ‘amazing stories of life in the snow’ (*setchū no kidan*). Bokushi

---

6 ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 41. Bokushi actually recorded only that his enquiry to Kyōden had been ‘during the Kansei era’ (1789-1800). However, an extant letter from Kyōden to Bokushi, considered by Mizuno Minoru and Takahashi Minoru to have been written in 1798 (*Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō*, pp. 91-93), suggests that Bokushi sent his draft material to Kyōden in 1797.
later sent similar enquiries to Bakin and Gyokuzan, as we will see below. An important question is what sort of literary environment prompted him to think of writing a book about the snow country, in collaboration with urban authors. Here I consider three trends in literature from the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards, on the basis of which Bokushi probably developed his idea about the book. The first is local Uonuma poets’ focus on ‘snow’ as a literary theme in haikai-writing; the second is a growing interest among intellectuals and political authorities in the geography and ethnography of regional areas; and the third is the emergence of attention to ‘rurality’ (inaka) in literary production in the metropolises.

It is understandable that ‘snow’ gradually assumed prominence as a theme among literary people in the Uonuma region, considering that the fashion for writing haikai provided them with many opportunities to depict their own lives and natural settings. In 1788, Kamimura Sanshi of Tōkamachi published Yuki no shū (Snow collection). This was a compilation of haikai verses on the theme of ‘snow’ composed by poets in provinces across the country. The book included verses by Bokushi’s father, Jōemon, and brother-in-law, Ryoro, as well as other acquaintances of the Suzuki family. Ryoro himself also compiled haikai anthologies entitled ‘Yuki no tamuke’ (Prayer in the snow) and ‘Yuki no tōge’ (A mountain path in the snow).

The wider intellectual focus on the geography and ethnography of the regions is evident in the very lively rate of production of regional

Chapter Six: Publishing Hokuetsu seppu

gazetteers (*chishi*) at this time. As Shirai Tetsuya and others have shown, a great many gazetteers were produced across the country in the Tokugawa period.\(^9\) This trend was inseparable from the political interest in regional cultures and environments that was displayed at both national and domain levels.\(^10\) The bakufu attempted to compile files of all local gazetteers, collecting approximately 2,000 pieces of work between 1803 and 1822.\(^11\) Aizu han, as one example among the domain authorities, conducted its own ethnographic survey and compiled ‘Shinpen Aizu fudoki’ (A new edition of Aizu ethnography) in 1809.\(^12\)

Bokushi seems to have been at least indirectly involved in the production of one local gazetteer through his service to village administration. To contribute to the Aizu han survey, Shiozawa administrators compiled a report in 1807 entitled ‘Echigo no kuni Uonuma gōri Shiozawa gumi fūzokuchō’ (An ethnographic account of Shiozawa District in Uonuma County, Echigo Province).\(^13\) The report was submitted by the district headman, Inokuchi Mokei, to Aizu han; however, as one local historian pointed out, Bokushi’s own involvement is suggested by the clear

---


similarity in some illustrations between this report and *Hokuetsu seppu*, as well as his close relationship with Mokei.\(^{14}\)

Another noteworthy opportunity for Bokushi to develop his interest in geography was his meeting and correspondence with the provincial geographers Koizumi Kimei (1761-1836) and his son Sōken (1796-1873), who were based in Imamachi, Echigo. Bokushi had the chance to learn geography from the Koizumis on at least two occasions. During their visit to Shiozawa in 1816, Bokushi, Kimei and Sōken climbed a mountain and surveyed all the surrounding peaks.\(^{15}\) Bokushi then visited the Koizumi family in 1819.\(^{16}\) Among existing landscape pictures by Kimei and by Bokushi, we can identify some similarity in technique and composition, as shown in Figure 6.2.

---

\(^{14}\) See Kenmotsu Toshio, ‘Kaidai Echigo no kuni Uonuma gōri Shiozawa gumi fūzokuchō’, in Imaizumi, Imaizumi and Shimizu (eds), *Essa sōsho*, vol. 8, pp. 190-91.


\(^{16}\) See ‘Shūgetsuan hokkushū’, in SBZ1, p. 788.
Figure 6.2: Landscape pictures by Koizumi Kimei and Bokushi

‘Uonuma gōri
Oritate mura
Tochiomata
onsen’
by Koizumi Kimei
(1834)

‘Akiyama onsen
no zu’
in Bokushi’s
manuscript of
‘Akiyama kikō’
(1829)


Bokushi’s awareness of his own regional culture and geography increased as a result of his communication with urban authors concerning the publication of his book. In particular, Bakin advised Bokushi to research existing geographical materials about Echigo Province. One major work was a gazetteer entitled ‘Echigo nayose’ (Encyclopaedia of Echigo), produced in 1756 by Maruyama Genjun (1687-1759), a local, Kyoto-educated doctor. It is said that Genjun became motivated to write a gazetteer of his own province after seeing many such works being published
while he was studying medicine in Kyoto. Letters written by Bakin in 1818 suggest that Genjun’s manuscript had been hand-copied among urban intellectuals. Influenced by Bakin, Bokushi visited Genjun’s grandson in 1819 and was able to read the original manuscript of ‘Echigo nayose’.

Finally, attention to regional cultures and geographic features also emerged within several genres of literature that were produced and widely enjoyed in the metropolises. In gesaku fiction, as the first instance, ‘rurality’ had become a theme around the 1790s, in parallel with the increasing economic and cultural links between Edo and surrounding provinces. Bokushi’s own region was first identified as a place representing ‘rurality’ in 1787, in Inaka shibai (A rural theatre) by Manzōtei (Morishima Chūyō, 1756?-83). This work comically depicts Uonuma’s rural culture and people, especially its dialect. According to Nakamura Yukihiko, the ridicule in Inaka shibai of the dialects and behaviour of rural people was also evident in other gesaku stories, including Ikku’s

We cannot judge for sure whether Bokushi was aware of such trends in popular literature; however, the urban authors with whom he was in contact certainly showed their interest in Bokushi’s own snowy region. Bakin, for example, wrote to Bokushi, probably in 1801: ‘I have been interested in learning about nature in your province and people’s life in the snow. Such knowledge will help in my writing. It will be much appreciated if you write about it for me’.  

Prose travelogue was another genre that aroused interest among the literate population in the countryside. The most influential of such works in this period were Saiyūki (Journey to the west) and Tōyūki (Journey to the east) by Tachibana Nankei (1753-1805), both published in 1795. Tōyūki, in particular, unfolds various episodes and landscapes of the provinces, in this case in the north-east. Nankei’s accounts of Echigo Province include a description of Echigo’s ‘nana-fushigi’, seven prominent and unusual natural features of this region including fields gushing crude oil and natural gas, and also a life-threatening experience Nankei had while travelling in the snow. This publication was mentioned in a letter from Bakin to Bokushi in 1818 during the ongoing discussion about their book project. We do not know, however, if Bokushi already knew about the work, and if so, who or what first brought it to his attention.

Cultural guidebooks also focused attention on the regions. In the aforementioned letter in 1818, Bakin mentioned Nihon sankai meisan zue
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

(An illustrated guide to famous products around Japan, published in 1799) as a popular work containing information about the snow country. As the book certainly includes an account of chijimi production in the snow in Bokushi’s region,\(^{26}\) it seems highly probable that members of the local elite, like Bokushi, knew this publication.

Thus we can see that Bokushi’s idea of writing about his own region, with a special emphasis on its snow, was probably nurtured by a mixture of trends that emerged in various literary genres from the late eighteenth century onwards. The extent to which Bokushi had his own ideas and knowledge about relevant literary trends before contacting urban authors and other intellectuals is not yet clear. The available evidence does suggest that Bokushi was much influenced by his meetings and correspondence with urban authors and intellectuals. In that sense, Bokushi was probably better at learning from and adopting the ideas of others than he was at originating his own ideas.

**The Provincial Literati and Print Culture**

Publication was and is the aim or dream of most writers. Bokushi’s enquiries to urban writers about the possibility of publishing a book based on his material raise the questions of how provincial amateur writers in his day envisaged publication, and whether they could realistically expect to publish books. Bokushi’s own experience shows in some detail the newly

\(^{26}\) Hirase Hosei and Shitomi Kangetsu, ‘Nihon sankai meisan zue’, in Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Harada Torao and Tanigawa Ken’ichi (eds), *Nihon shomin seisaku shiryō shūsei*, vol. 10 (San’ichi shobō, 1970), pp. 68-69, 76.
formed and developing relation between provincial amateur writers and print culture in the late Tokugawa period.

It is clear that Bokushi was convinced that publication was a way to earn him fame. His objective in publishing a book was to make widely known the life and environment of his snowy region, as well as to make his own name famous. Bokushi’s joy in achieving this objective through the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* is openly expressed in an 1837 letter written after he received a proof copy of his book. He wrote, ‘This is the fruit of my four-decade desire. The dream has now come true. I would have no regret even if I died now. It is my great pleasure to hand down my name to posterity’. However, this attitude of Bokushi’s towards fame was not favourably interpreted by Bakin after their ‘four decades of relationship’. In an 1837 letter to another friend, Bakin described Bokushi in negative terms as ‘a seeker after fame’ (*meibun o konomu heki*). Bokushi’s life is indeed a showcase of the ways in which provincial practitioners of the arts earned fame in print media. The easiest way to get their names into print was to appear as the author of a *haikai* verse in a published anthology. As mentioned earlier, Bokushi’s name first appeared in Ryoro’s *haikai* book, *Yamazatoshū*, published in 1793. It was much more difficult, and therefore a source of great pride, to compile and publish a *haikai* book oneself. This was nevertheless a possible project for provincial poets around this period. Bokushi’s *haikai* contest in 1800

---

27 ‘Shokan’, in SBZ1, p. 972.
28 Mimura Seizaburō (comp.), *Kyokutei shokanshū*, vol. 9 of *Nihon geirin sōsho* (Rokugōkan, 1929), p. 152.
29 Niigataken kyōdo sōsho henshū inkai (ed.), *Niigataken kyōdo sōsho*, vol. 7 (Rekishi toshosha, 1979), pp. 167-81.
resulted in the publication of selected verses, as discussed in Chapter Four. The book, *Jippyō hokkushū*, like Ryoro’s *Yamazatoshū*, was produced by a Kyoto publisher specializing in *haikai*. To finance publication as well as to cover other expenses, *haikai* contests, as we have seen, collected entry fees from all participants. In the case of private compilations such as *Yamazatoshū*, every poet who appeared in the book probably contributed financially in advance and/or bought a copy or copies of the book.

Some rural intellectuals privately printed their solo work despite the financial burden involved. Among Bokushi’s peers, the priest Kaiun of Untōan temple published a collection of his Chinese poems in 1800, and the doctor Kuroda Genkaku published a scholarly book in 1822, as mentioned in Chapter Four. The descendants of Genkaku believed that the cost of this publication greatly affected their household finances for a long period afterwards.30

A different way for provincial people to get their names in print was to become a local informant for or patron of established urban authors. The practice of acknowledging local people’s assistance was longstanding, but Bashō’s citing of specific people in his travelogue, *Oku no hosomichi*, would have had the greatest influence on authors and their local patrons because of the established status of the work among the large population of *haikai* practitioners.31 Bokushi’s name appeared in Jippensha Ikku’s *gesaku*

31 The main text of *Oku no hosomichi* acknowledges by name at least twelve local people who and temples which assisted Bashō and his companion Sora in offering accommodation or other assistance during their journey. See Hagiwara Yasuo (annotator), *Bashō Oku no hosomichi* (Iwanami shoten, 1979), pp. 9-71.
travelogue in 1820 after he offered assistance on Ikku’s visit to Shiozawa, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Bokushi was also acknowledged as a local informant for Bakin’s encyclopaedic and bibliographical work, *Gendō hōgen* (Sober talks at random), which was published from 1819 onwards.\textsuperscript{32} Bakin’s letters dated 1818/2/30 and 5/17 contain a detailed report to Bokushi about seven items, based on material from Bokushi that Bakin had decided to include in *Gendō hōgen*.\textsuperscript{33}

With the growth of interest in non-urban subject-matter, some urban authors actively sought to develop their own networks of provincial people to act as sources of information and/or patrons. In 1827, Bokushi’s name was publicised the most widely so far, when Bakin acknowledged Bokushi’s contribution to the recently released volume of his best-selling long novel, *Nansō Satomi hakkenden* (The tale of eight dog-samurai of the Satomi clan in Nansō province). Bakin inserted a large illustration, of four-page size, and foldable, which had originally been painted by Bokushi and then redrawn by an Edo *ukiyo-e* artist (see Figure 6.3). He also wrote a brief profile of Bokushi, together with a comment on the bull-fighting in the illustration. This material had initially been intended for use in the failed Bakin-Bokushi book project, ‘Echigo seppu’.\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{33} ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 196-99, 203-04. In 1819 Bakin also suggested to Tadano Makuzu that he would be able to use some parts of Makuzu’s materials with acknowledgement of her name in *Gendō hōgen*, although this did not happen in the end. See Bettina Gramlich-Oka, *Thinking Like a Man: Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 156-57.

\textsuperscript{34} See Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, pp. 129-32.
The least common and most difficult way for provincial people to participate in print culture was by publication of a monograph, as a named author and without self-funding. Like other researchers, I have identified very few works of this kind, though it can be difficult to judge whether a particular book was published on a commercial basis or through self-funding. *Hokuetsu seppu* is considered to be one of the rarest type of
publication, although, as I will discuss later, there are more complexities in its publication process than there might appear to be. The scarcity of examples of this kind notwithstanding, a very similar publication to *Hokuetsu seppu* did appear in 1812, at a time when Bokushi’s negotiations with his urban collaborators were stagnating. The book was entitled *Hokuetsu kidan* (Amazing stories from North-Etsu province), and was written by Tachibana Konron (b. 1761?), of the town of Sanjō in Echigo.

For this book, Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783-1842), a popular gesaku writer in Edo, provided editorial assistance and a preface, and Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), one of the most famous ukiyo-e artists in Edo, drew illustrations. All these arrangements were made by a publisher in Edo, the proprietor of Eijudō, who had received the manuscript from Konron in Echigo, and found it to have potential in the current publication market. Due to the distance between Edo and Echigo, the publisher proceeded to publish the book without further involving Konron. In this regard, the process of publication of *Hokuetsu kidan* is quite different from that of *Hokuetsu seppu*.

Does the coincidence between Konron’s *Hokuetsu kidan* and Bokushi’s project imply the existence of many members of the provincial literary elite with ambitions to publish books in this period? Positive evidence is found in Gramlich-Oka’s study of Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825), a female writer living in Sendai. In 1819 Bakin all of a sudden received a manuscript from Makuzu, a complete stranger to him, with a request for

---

professional advice on publication. Makuzu’s manuscript was not considered by Bakin to be publishable because it offered a quite radical view of women’s place in the social order; in other words, Makuzu ‘[thought] like a man’. Bakin wrote to Makuzu that ‘too many sections [in the text were] taboo’, and thus any publication might have breached the bakufu’s publication codes. However, he suggested that she should produce some dozens of fair copies of the work for circulation among the literary community.  

Both Makuzu’s action and Bakin’s reaction constitute evidence that Bokushi and Konron were not unique. In addition, an 1813 letter from Kyōden to an amateur writer in Kuwana, Ise Province, also reveals another case in which an urban author was approached by a provincial writer who dreamed of publishing his own work of popular literature. Although researchers have not yet found a substantial number of cases similar to these, it is evident that the provincial intellectual community had matured to an extent that enabled at least some of its members to make real efforts to publish their own books in the metropolises.

As we have seen, members of the provincial literati gradually became involved in the production of printed materials, from haikai anthologies to books in popular prose. Bokushi certainly saw his fellow members of the rural elite participating in publication in various ways, and this must surely have increased his own ambition. Having examined the environment in which local literati wrote and published, I will now discuss

36 See Gramlich-Oka, Thinking Like a Man, pp. 139-44, 156-58, 181-208.
the complex process of Bokushi’s negotiations with urban authors about publishing a book on his snowy region.

**Bokushi’s Negotiations with Urban Authors**

The whole process relating to Bokushi’s book project spanned four decades, starting from his initial proposal to Kyōden, which was probably made in 1797 when Bokushi was twenty-eight years of age. I will first describe the main events relating to Bokushi’s negotiations with Kyōden, Bakin, Gyokuzan and Fuyō, prior to the successful Bokushi-Kyōzan collaboration from 1830 onwards that resulted in the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu*. (A summary is given in Table 6.1.) I will then analyse the major factors responsible for such developments, showing that Bokushi’s negotiations were affected by a range of circumstances, from the general development in culture in the provinces to more specific historical trends, as well as personal contingencies and individual attributes.

Bokushi sent Kyōden and, later, other urban authors his drawings, and miniature models of snow tools such as sleighs and boots, together with samples of his writing. It seems that Kyōden was much interested in Bokushi’s materials, and planned to publish a book based on them. He even entitled the prospective book ‘Hokuetsu setsudan’ (Snow tales of North Etsu). But publishers were more cautious about the book proposal, requiring Kyōden as the author to contribute fifty ryō to the costs. The

---

39 This information is recorded in a letter from Kyōden to Bokushi dated 1800/12/1, cited in Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, p. 106. However, Bokushi’s ‘Eisei kirokushū’ recorded that ‘as much as a hundred ryō is required’ (in SBZ2, p. 41).
proposed project lapsed at this point. Bokushi then asked Bakin to consider publishing a book based on his materials from Echigo. Bakin said that he must decline Bokushi’s proposal so as not to offend Kyōden, who was ‘a friend as close as a brother’.\(^40\) (In contrast to Bakin’s view, Kyōzan and other people considered Bakin to be a disciple of Kyōden, rather than a close friend. This and related matters will be discussed below.)

The next round of Bokushi’s negotiations probably started in 1806, this time with Gyokuzan in Osaka. According to an episode later related in *Hokuetsu seppu*, Bokushi sent Gyokuzan several pictures of a snow-covered landscape, probably together with a letter containing a proposal to publish. He was prompted to contact Gyokuzan after seeing an illustration of an Echigo snowfield in Gyokuzan’s *Ehon taikōki* (An illustrated tale of Toyotomi Hideyoshi); he considered this illustration unrealistic.\(^41\) Unlike on the previous occasions, Bokushi’s proposal in this instance was quickly accepted not only by Gyokuzan but also by a publisher in Osaka. The project was abandoned, however, because of Gyokuzan’s death in 1808, according to Bokushi.\(^42\) Then, in 1812, Bokushi met with the painter-author Suzuki Fuyō, who was travelling from Edo to Echigo. Fuyō also promised that he would work with Bokushi to publish a book, but he died in 1816 after Bokushi had sent him a set of draft material.\(^43\)

Kyōden also died in 1816. Bokushi then approached Bakin again, hoping that Bakin would no longer hesitate, as Kyōden had supposedly been

---

\(^40\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, p. 41.
\(^41\) HS-Iwanami, p. 70; SCT, p. 61.
\(^42\) ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in SBZ2, pp. 40-41.
\(^43\) Ibid., pp. 50, 66. Unlike in the other cases, researchers have not yet discovered any record of the negotiation between Bokushi and Fuyō besides Bokushi’s own statement.
the reason for Bakin’s earlier refusal. In 1818, Bokushi received a very positive reply, including concrete advice from Bakin about the book project. Bokushi was greatly encouraged by Bakin’s letter, and so he prepared and sent much more material to Bakin, who was then supposed to produce a draft of the book, entitled ‘Echigo seppu’. Within a few years, however, the Bakin-Bokushi project totally stagnated. The bulk of the material sent by Bokushi languished for nearly a decade.

Table 6.1: Bokushi's negotiations with urban authors over the publication of 'snow tales'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Development (date of event or letter, where available: month/date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyōden</td>
<td>1797?</td>
<td>Bokushi contacts Kyōden. Kyōden asks Bokushi to send pictures of and texts about the snow country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1798?</td>
<td>Kyōden receives Bokushi’s pictures, texts and miniature models of snow tools. (2/24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Kyōden apologizes for the delay and reports that a publisher requires the author’s contribution of 50 ryō. (12/1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakin</td>
<td>1801?</td>
<td>Bakin expresses his interest in Bokushi’s writing and drawings relating to the snow country. (3/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1805?-06?)</td>
<td>Bakushi asks Bakin about the possibility of publishing a book with him. Bakin declines Bokushi’s proposal because of Bakin’s relationship with Kyōden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyoku-zan</td>
<td>1806?</td>
<td>Bokushi asks Gyokuzan about the possibility of publishing a book with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1807?</td>
<td>Gyokuzan replies with a rough idea for a book. (1/? Gayokuzan reports that a publisher (the Akita-ya) has agreed to publish the book. He also assures Bokushi of his commitment and asks Bokushi to work speedily. (2/7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1808?</td>
<td>Bokushi is informed by the Akita-ya of Gyokuzan’s death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuyō</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Bokushi meets Fuyō in Tōkamachi and invites him to Shiozawa. (7/24) Fuyō accepts Bokushi’s proposal, and Bokushi sends draft material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Fuyō dies. (5/17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Kyōden dies. (9/7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1818?</td>
<td>Bokushi starts corresponding with Kyōzan. Kyōzan shows interest in Bokushi’s materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Bokin asks Bokin to consider the plan again. Bokin accepts Bokushi’s proposal and offers advice on publication. (2/30) Bokin and Bokushi decide the title of their book: ‘Echigo seppu’. (7/29) Bokushi sends draft materials. (8/25, 10/15, 10/28, 11/08)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Bokushi goes on a field trip to find material for ‘Echigo seppu’. (1/20-3/07) Bokushi travels to Edo and meets Bokin and other literati. (urū 4/15-6/13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Bokin reports that he has heard that a publisher is interested in ‘Echigo seppu’. (1/3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Kyōzan presents Bokushi with a proposal to produce <em>Echigo no kuni yuki monogatari</em> under Bokushi’s primary authorship (10/21). Bokushi declines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Kyōzan asks Bokushi to reconsider. (4/2, 4/23) Bokushi urges Bokin to hasten the project; Bokin tells Bokushi to ask someone else for help, if he cannot wait any more. Bokushi asks Kyōzan for help. (9/6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Among the many factors affecting Bokushi’s negotiations with the urban authors, we have already examined the general cultural circumstances surrounding members of the provincial elite and practitioners of the arts like Bokushi, particularly with regard to the growth in information flow from the metropolises to the provinces by means of commodity trading, travelling, book-reading and letter communication. We have also noted that Bokushi’s specific personal experiences, such as his travel to western Japan in 1796 and his engagement with *haikai* contests in 1797 and 1800, are likely to have helped him develop his correspondence network beyond his own locality, and, presumably, to have enhanced the sophistication of his manners and skills in communication. We have further explored the
relationships between popular urban authors and provincial fans in the early nineteenth century. Kyōden and Bakin were certainly amongst the popular authors who received many fan letters and visitors. Such historical circumstances help to explain Bokushi’s approaches to the urban authors discussed above.

Several more specific circumstances also affected Bokushi’s negotiations with particular urban authors. His contact with the Osaka author Gyokuzan, for instance, can be considered in the context of the competition in the publishing industry between Osaka and Edo in this period. A letter from Gyokuzan to Bokushi dated 1807/2/7 indicates that the proprietor of the Akita-ya, a famous old publisher in Osaka, was very interested in Bokushi’s draft, and was even ready to submit a publication application to the relevant authorities. Gyokuzan also gave a guarantee of his own commitment to the proposed publication.44 Such a positive and prompt reaction from Gyokuzan and the Akita-ya is partly attributable to the increasing difficulty experienced by publishers and authors in Osaka in competing with their Edo counterparts. As Konta Yōzō shows, the superiority of the Edo publication market, in terms of the number of publications, to those in Osaka and Kyoto, became evident around the end of the eighteenth century, though publishers in east and west continued to compete with each other.45 Interestingly, Gyokuzan’s own Ehon taikōki was one of the most successful books produced by Osaka publishers in their fierce competition with Edo. However, since the bakufu eventually banned

this best-seller for political reasons — the bakufu naturally did not like books glorifying Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the ruler prior to Tokugawa Ieyasu — the difficulties experienced by Osaka publishers only deepened. Nakamura even suggests the possibility that the bakufu’s ban on *Ehon taikōki* had been secretly requested by Edo publishers.

These circumstances probably help to explain Gyokuzan’s comment in a letter to Bokushi that the Akita-ya wanted to publish best-selling books quickly in order to recover from financial problems. Perhaps Gyokuzan’s eagerness to publish with Bokushi can be understood in that context too. It would have been exciting for him to contemplate publishing another successful book using material that Kyōden and Bakin of Edo had endorsed, but had been unable to use themselves for financial or personal reasons. If Bokushi had told Gyokuzan about the situation in relation to Kyōden and Bakin, Bokushi’s publication proposal would surely have seemed all the more appealing to authors and publishers in Osaka.

It is clear that various unforeseen events interfered with Bokushi’s negotiations with the urban authors he contacted. His collaborators’ deaths, in particular, made a dramatic difference. The death of Gyokuzan most strongly affected Bokushi, who described it as ‘the bitterest regret of my life’. Fuyō’s death in 1816 again aborted Bokushi’s hopes, but Kyōden’s death in the same year, on the other hand, gave him a chance to restart negotiations with Bakin.

---

Bokushi’s approach to Kyōden had probably also been assisted by a certain political incident in which Kyōden was involved during the so-called Kansei Reform. As is well known, in 1791 the bakufu administration charged Kyōden and his publisher, Tsuta-ya Jūzaburō, over a breach of the publication code. Scholars believe that this incident was to a large extent politically motivated, as part of the bakufu reformists’ effort to dampen the supposedly hedonistic atmosphere of urban life and promote a more sober and moral society. Best-selling sharebon, popular stories centring on the world of the pleasure quarters, were a clear target, and Kyōden and Jūzaburō were representative figures of that genre at that time. It is understood that neither the content of the particular publications in question, nor the conduct of Kyōden and Jūzaburō in this instance, was especially offensive. The bakufu reformists, however, punished the people responsible for the Tsuta-ya books harshly as a warning to the whole publishing industry to apply the censorship law more strictly: Kyōden was sentenced to fifty days in handcuffs; Jūzaburō was fined half of his wealth; and two managers (gyōji) of the Edo publishers’ guild who had passed Jūzaburō’s application for publication were banished from Edo.50 After this incident, Kyōden spent several years in a slump, until he found new inspiration in the study of

cultural history as well as in writing novels on historical themes — a new genre called ‘yomihon’ — from around 1798.51

We do not know whether or not Bokushi was aware of the pending change of direction in Kyōden’s literary work at this time, but his approach to Kyōden around 1797 was very timely. A letter from Kyōden to Bokushi in 1798 mentions that he was then writing a new yomihon novel, Chūshin Suikoden (Loyal vassals of Suikoden). This book later helped Kyōden regain his reputation as a leader among Edo writers.52 Moreover, such a shift of interest was not limited to Kyōden personally. Nakamura argues, for example, that Edo gesaku literature or popular novels underwent a sea-change around this period from expression of a sophisticated urban taste to a more popular-oriented approach.53 Evidently, the enquiry from Bokushi to Kyōden reached Edo just as gesaku writers were starting to grope for new themes.

Bokushi’s initial approach to the urban authors seems to constitute a pioneering attempt by a provincial writer to publish in the metropolises. As far as I know, there was no such case prior to 1797 among the people surrounding Bokushi or even among provincials elsewhere who were his contemporaries. We have no clue as to what in particular brought him to the point of enquiring with a popular gesaku author like Kyōden about the possibility of publishing a book together, at a time when the experience of Bokushi’s fellow provincial literati in publication had been limited to haikai books. It seems that Bokushi’s entrepreneurial daring was far more strongly

51 Koike, Santō Kyōden, p. 99.
52 See Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, p. 92.
displayed in this cultural pursuit than in the business activities that we have previously examined.

As discussed above, the negotiations between Bokushi and his urban collaborators resulted from a complex combination of general social developments and particular events. In terms of the social and cultural environment, Bokushi lived at a time when the urban publishing world was expanding its range of interest beyond urban culture, and some amateur writers in the provinces were becoming ambitious enough to get involved in literary work beyond *haikai* poetry. Bokushi was one such ambitious rural writer, who attempted to cross the boundary between the world of urban, professional publishing and that of amateur writers. On the other hand, however, the actual course of Bokushi’s negotiations with his urban partners was affected by many unpredictable happenings. I will continue to examine the complexity of these negotiations, now focusing on the human relationships among Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan.

**Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan**

The interaction of Bokushi, Bakin and Kyōzan in relation to the ‘snow tales’ project is significant, firstly, because of the geographical and social gap between the provincial amateur and the urban professional authors in the early modern context, and secondly, because it shows the complexity of their actions, reflecting their self-interest and various emotions as well as their concrete circumstances. This complexity was most evident when Bokushi switched from relying on Bakin to relying on Kyōzan. In his written recollection of this triangular relationship, Bokushi seemingly tried
to simplify and justify his own actions. He claimed that after spending a decade trying in vain to publish a book with Bakin, he became very concerned about his and Bakin’s ages — they were ‘sixty and sixty-three’ respectively in 1829 — so he ‘could not help sending a letter to urge Bakin to publish their book’. Bakin’s reply was, however, ‘Ask someone else — whoever you like’. Devastated, Bokushi then asked Kyôzan for help, according to his own account. But the reality seems to have been more complicated, judging from other sources.

In fact, the triangular relationship among Bokushi, Bakin and Kyôzan had begun a decade earlier than the 1829 intervention by Kyôzan offering Bokushi primary authorship in a proposed book project. A letter from Bakin to Bokushi dated 1818/7/29 provides details. It indicates that Bokushi had ‘recently started corresponding with Kyôzan, after Kyôden’s death’ in 1816, and that Kyôzan had sent a reply to Bokushi, expressing his interest in Bokushi’s material about the snow country. Kyôzan knew that the late Kyôden had once received materials in bulk from Bokushi. Before replying to Kyôzan, Bokushi consulted Bakin about how to deal with Kyôzan’s approach, even showing Bakin his draft letter to Kyôzan. This prompted Bakin to criticize Kyôzan’s personality as well as his literary talent, which, Bakin said, ‘is completely insufficient to produce the sort of book that the “snow tales” should be’.55

Bakin must have considered Kyôzan’s expression of interest to be a new offence against him in the context of a longstanding feud between him

and the Santō brothers, particularly Kyōzan. In 1790, Bakin had decided to become a writer after spending years in misery as a masterless samurai in Edo. He visited Kyōden, a best-selling author then, seeking guidance. Bakin gradually established his career over several years, with help of various kinds from Kyōden, including an introduction to the publisher Tsuta-ya. Kyōden also provided accommodation to Bakin on occasion. In Bakin’s 1791 debut work as a writer of gesaku fiction, he identified himself as a disciple (monjin) of Kyōden. Thereafter, however, the two writers became conspicuous rivals in Edo popular literature, and Bakin tended to keep his distance from Kyōden and his peers. Moreover, Bakin would not admit any one-sided debt to Kyōden, because he believed that he had also helped Kyōden considerably when Kyōden was mentally unfit to produce proper work after the handcuff punishment.  

Kyōden’s brother Kyōzan disliked Bakin’s attitude and his personality probably even more strongly than Kyōden did. Especially after Bakin’s failure to attend Kyōden’s funeral in 1816, Kyōzan’s hatred of Bakin intensified, and many other literary figures close to the Santō brothers also turned against him.

Bokushi’s thinking at the point of the 1818 approach to him from Kyōzan may be comparable to the psychology of a person who is about to become involved in a triangular romantic relationship — a mixture of interest in attracting the attention of another, a sense of obligation to tell everything to the existing partner, and some level of intention to take

advantage of this opportunity to move the existing partner forward. Bakin’s hostility to Kyōzan notwithstanding, Bokushi seems to have maintained his correspondence with Kyōzan even while corresponding with Bakin, although there may have been a break of some years in the exchange between Bokushi and Kyōzan.58

Then on 1829/10/21, Kyōzan made Bokushi a very generous offer. Kyōzan’s proposal at this stage contrasted starkly with Bakin’s idea. Firstly, it guaranteed recognition of Bokushi’s primary authorship. Secondly, the proposal was to write a popular, comic book with illustrations, which could easily and quickly be published without problems over finance. Thirdly, it did not require painstaking work in drawing and writing on Bokushi’s part, as professionals in Edo would rewrite and redraw all his material. All Bokushi would have to do for this book project was, according to this proposal, to quickly ‘sketch [scenery] of Echigo in the snow as travellers wandering around do’ and ‘draft accounts of those things as if talking to someone’.59

This proposal is normally understood as a sudden intervention or interference by Kyōzan in the Bokushi-Bakin project. However, Tsuda Mayumi, a specialist in Kyōzan’s work, has recently argued that the proposal was in effect an outcome of Bokushi’s communication with Kyōzan during 1829. As evidence, Tsuda points to the intimacy already established between Bokushi and Kyōzan, as expressed in Kyōzan’s letters to Bokushi in 1829, and also to an entry in Bakin’s diary noting that Bakin

58 An active relationship is suggested in a letter from Kyōzan to Bokushi dated 1829/9/20, which is the earliest among those available between these two. ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 283-85.
59 Ibid., pp. 288-89.
‘received an important letter’ from Bokushi in the ninth month and ‘wrote a long reply to him on 10/26’. On this basis, Tsuda suspects that Bokushi had already closely consulted with Kyōzan about the Bokushi-Bakin project, which had long been stagnant, and some positive reaction from Kyōzan encouraged Bokushi to push Bakin harder in 1829. 60

I agree with Tsuda’s view. As mentioned in Chapter Five, in 1829 the number of letters from Bokushi to Bakin rose to seven, compared to three or four in previous years (see Table 5.5). This, together with the evidence presented by Tsuda, suggests that in this year Bokushi was more active than in previous years in negotiating with Bakin, probably because he was considering an alternative plan. Bokushi perhaps behaved more tactically than has previously been thought in this triangular relationship.

Bokushi’s actions after the 1829 offer from Kyōzan reveal the complex psychology of a person in a dilemma. At first, Bokushi decided to decline Kyōzan’s offer because of his existing obligation to Bakin. 61 In a letter dated 1830/3/16, Kyōzan tried again to persuade Bokushi, even suggesting a way of countering the foreseeable complaint from Bakin. Kyōzan suggested that the book could be published as if it had been developed from Kyōden’s draft of Hokuetsu setsudan, the work that had been proposed as early as 1797, although Kyōden had not actually produced anything after receiving material from Bokushi three decades previously. An even more cautious suggestion by Kyōzan was that the book could be

---

published as if there had been no consultation with Bokushi beforehand.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 292-93.}
Meanwhile, to try to win Bokushi’s favour, Kyōzan used Bokushi’s name in his new work of romantic fiction, 
*Futaeginu sato no iroage* (The double-embroidered kimono: a love affair in Yoshiwara). In the letter dated 1830/3/16, Kyōzan wrote to Bokushi that though he himself had actually written the preface of the book, he had presented it as Bokushi’s work, having already submitted the manuscript to the publisher.\footnote{Ibid., p. 292.} Bokushi immediately asked Kyōzan in a reply to purchase ten copies of the book for him.\footnote{Ibid., p. 295.}

Bokushi then tried to resolve his dilemma over the book project by giving Kyōzan new material for publication. In 1830 Bokushi produced a manuscript entitled ‘Shōsetsu Kōdaiji odori’ (The tale of the Kōdaiji-temple dance), based on an old story about a local priest’s love affair. The reason Bokushi thought his novel might be publishable was that there had been a virtually nation-wide vogue for a folk song called ‘Shinbo Kōdaiji odori’, which ridiculed the love affair of a priest of the Kōdaiji temple in Uonuma County.\footnote{See ‘Shōsetsu Kōdaiji odori’, in SBZ1, pp. 851, 854. Also see Haga Noboru, *Edo jōhōbunkashi kenkyū* (Kōseisha, 1996), pp. 79-80.} Kyōzan’s wish not only to solve his existing problem but also to publish another piece of work was not granted, because Kyōzan told him that ‘Kōdaiji odori’ would violate the bakufu’s publication code by dealing with an immoral affair, especially as it concerned a priest.\footnote{‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 296.} Kyōzan stressed that a book about the ‘snow country’ would be far more welcome than ‘Kōdaiji odori’ in the current publication environment, adding that this
kind of book would be more appealing to the audience if it were ‘authored’ by a person native to the snow country. Obviously this comment aimed to challenge the existing plan to publish under Bakin’s authorship. Furthermore, Kyōzan also attacked Bakin on grounds of his personality. He enclosed in a letter to Bokushi ‘a short history of the life of Bakin’, which described Bakin as an arrogant and antisocial person, who had forgotten all the assistance he had previously received from Kyōden and Tsuta-ya Jūzaburō.67

If Tsuda and I are correct in interpreting the sources, all these suggestions and comments by Kyōzan caused Bokushi to urge Bakin even harder to expedite his writing of ‘Echigo seppu’. Bokushi’s pushing produced an angry reply from Bakin, who told him to ‘Ask someone else — whoever you like’, according to Bokushi.68 This exchange subsequently led to the break-up of their partnership, then to Bokushi’s reliance on Kyōzan’s guidance instead.

In this process and at a later stage too, Bokushi’s, Bakin’s and Kyōzan’s actions were psychologically complex. Bokushi resorted to somewhat tactical negotiations with Kyōzan to secure his own position, enclosing the angry reply from Bakin in a letter dated 1830/9/6 to Kyōzan, and asking Kyōzan to confirm that he would take over the book project. Bokushi told Kyōzan that upon receiving his confirmation, he then intended to show it to Bakin and thus finalize their break-up.69 This suggests that at that stage Bokushi was yet to reach a final decision on how to deal with

67 Ibid., pp. 297-300.
Bakin’s anger. A sincere apology to Bakin might still have remained as a possible action in Bokushi’s mind, if Kyōzan were unwilling to make a firm commitment.

Kyōzan’s reactions also well represent a wavering mind. The evidence for this consists of a letter he wrote over two days, 1830/9/18-19. The first part of the letter shows Kyōzan’s reluctance to be directly involved in the Bakin-Bokushi break-up despite his previous offer to help Bokushi publish a book. He was evidently afraid of Bakin’s retaliation if Bokushi revealed that he had switched to reliance on Kyōzan. Therefore, he considered a plan of deceit that could be a face-saver for Bakin and, consequently, less troublesome for Kyōzan and Bokushi too. He suggested that Bokushi should request Bakin to return all draft texts and pictures to him, on the pretext that he had decided to compile a private copy of his work. If the draft material were successfully returned to Bokushi, Kyōzan would then use it to publish a book, but would tell people that he was merely completing the work that his deceased brother, Kyōden, had left half-done. However, Kyōzan then changed his mind, literally overnight. Next morning, he wrote the latter half of the letter: ‘I read your letter again, and I see it’s now apparent to Bakin that you have already asked me for help in the snow tales project. Now that this is the case, I endorse your plan to show him my proposal’. Then Kyōzan dashed off the details of his idea for the new book to be produced by Bokushi and him.

We do not know what Bokushi told Bakin after receiving Kyōzan’s approval of his plan, but available sources suggest that Bakin’s reaction was

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 281.
unexpectedly mild from the point of view of Bokushi and Kyōzan. In a letter to Bokushi dated 1831/10/11, Kyōzan wrote ‘I’m relieved’, because Bokushi had previously informed Kyōzan that Bakin had expressed hopes for the success of Bokushi’s publication with Kyōzan.\(^{72}\) It is probable that Bokushi’s effort to maintain the peace helped avoid a rupture in his relationship with Bakin, and even made possible a reconciliation between Bakin and Kyōzan. Bokushi continued to send seasonal greetings and gifts to Bakin as well as to Kyōzan, while he repeatedly asked Kyōzan to visit Bakin.\(^{73}\) Eventually Kyōzan did visit Bakin, on 1835/3/7, for the first time in more than two decades. They even discussed the issue of suitable publishers for the book. Bakin agreed with Kyōzan’s opinion that the Chōji-ya should be the one to be approached first. Bakin also offered his help in negotiating with the Chōji-ya, as he had previously produced books with this publisher.\(^{74}\)

These events, however, did not lead to complete peace in the triangular relationship. Interference or lack of co-operation by Bakin in the Bokushi-Kyōzan partnership continued greatly to annoy them over at least three issues. First, according to a note by Bokushi, Bakin refused to return any draft materials previously sent to him by Bokushi, who guessed that Bakin did not want them to be passed on to Kyōzan.\(^{75}\) Instead of returning the materials, in 1834 Bakin compiled eight rolls of ‘Echigo snow pictures’ using ‘several hundred pictures and notes’ sent from Bokushi.\(^{76}\) Next,
Bakin wrote a letter to Bokushi in 1835 telling him in confidence that it was not Kyōzan but he who had in effect made a publication agreement with the publisher Chōji-ya. This supposedly confidential letter was read by Kyōzan, who was allowed by Bokushi to do so in the context of arrangements over mail delivery. Bokushi’s action in showing the letter to Kyōzan might have been intended to prove to Kyōzan his loyalty. Kyōzan described Bakin’s interference as expressed in this letter as ‘an evil attempt to rob me of my achievement’.  

The title of the proposed book was a third area of contention. Bokushi received a strong complaint from Bakin regarding the book’s title when he and Kyōzan were already in the middle of proofreading Hokuetsu seppu. Previously, Bakin and Bokushi had settled on ‘Echigo seppu’ as the title of their book. Bakin now censured Kyōzan and Bokushi for stealing the word ‘seppu’. Bokushi forwarded the letter he had received from Bakin to Kyōzan to facilitate discussion of how to deal with the complaint. In a reply dated 1836/2/30, Kyōzan expressed his anger on the one hand, and sense of resignation in dealing with complaints from Bakin on the other. Kyōzan told Bokushi to do his best to placate Bakin by writing whatever would please him. Kyōzan also urged Bokushi to prepare to counter further interference from Bakin: it would possibly come, he said, in the form of a declaration by Bakin that he would write a sequel to Hokuetsu seppu himself. Kyōzan was afraid that Bakin might obtain support in this matter from the publisher, Chōji-ya.

78 Ibid., p. 333.
79 Ibid., p. 347.
Chapter Six: Publishing *Hokuetsu seppu*

The confrontation between Bakin and Kyōzan over the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* persisted and became more intense over time. Some of Kyōzan’s letters to Bokushi contain highly emotional and offensive words directed against Bakin. For example, a letter dated 1835/9/25 says:

> I have observed Bakin’s hypocrisy over fifty years. He has acted dishonestly time and again. Now the old man has lost his sight in one eye, lost his only son, lost his home, become sickly and is in trouble. Heaven knows what [sin] he is paying for!\(^80\)

It is likely that Bakin’s curses directed at Kyōzan were even stronger, because Bokushi, who had heard the censure from both sides, wrote that Bakin’s attitude was as shameful as ‘the flaw in the crystal’.\(^81\)

In this harsh conflict between the Edo authors, Bokushi appears in his own record of events as a genuine man of patience and harmony, wishing to be an intermediary between them according to his motto, ‘patience and endurance’\(^82\). However, the real situation seems to have been more complicated. As Takahashi has pointed out, Bakin’s diary quite clearly suggests that in 1834 he received from Bokushi a few fresh sets of writing, entitled ‘Bokushi zakkō’ (lit. Bokushi’s miscellaneous writing, probably two bundles) and ‘Essetsu yodan’ (lit. More talks on Echigo’s snow). Bakin read them from 11/15 to 11/19, although he did not write any comments on the text.\(^83\) Takahashi writes that this episode perhaps implies

---

\(^80\) Ibid., p. 334.


\(^82\) ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 277.

Bokushi’s intention to publish a sequel to \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} with Bakin.\footnote{Takahashi, \textit{Hokuetsu seppu no shisō}, pp. 116-17.} I, however, interpret this apparent action of Bokushi differently, as a tactic deployed in case Kyōzan’s work on \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} stagnated. In fact, as we will see below (Table 6.2), Kyōzan was not really active in producing a manuscript until 1835. So, Bokushi’s action can be seen as insurance against the failure of the Bokushi-Kyōzan project. In any case, the relation between Bokushi and Bakin did not totally cease after the 1830 break-up. This alone implies Bokushi’s skill in negotiation and in maintaining relationships with various people, especially famous figures.

As shown above, the correspondence exchanged between Bakin and Bokushi and between Kyōzan and Bokushi illustrates a great range of human interactions, involving various kinds of emotions including rivalry, indecision, friendliness, distrust and ambition. The rural amateur writer, Bokushi, happened to become involved in the intense rivalry between the famous urban authors, but his actions proved to be tactical rather than naïve. Next, we will examine the interactions between Bokushi and his urban collaborators in the actual process of producing a book about the ‘snow country’ in the publishing world of the late Tokugawa period.

\textbf{Bokushi, the Edo Publishing World, and \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}}

As I have already noted, the most significant aspect of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} for historical studies is the fact that this successful publication was the result of collaboration between a rural amateur writer and an urban professional author. In the following examination of the collaboration process, I identify
the extent of Bokushi’s participation in the project, the tactics used by Kyōzan and Bokushi to ensure *Hokuetsu seppu* would be successful, and what specific roles Kyōzan and Bokushi eventually played. Thus the discussion here entails evaluation of Bokushi’s actual capacity to negotiate with the urban, central arena of culture. I argue that Bokushi certainly crossed the perceived boundary between the rural and the urban communities of literature and the arts; significantly, however, his participation in the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* also indicates the limited extent to which a rural writer could work in the mainstream of literary production in the early nineteenth century in Japan.

The authorship of *Hokuetsu seppu* is one important issue in assessing Bokushi’s actual participation in this publication project, because it reveals the ambiguity of his position. Bokushi’s authorship now appears indisputable. But this was not always the case. In fact, earlier generations of scholars such as Ichijima Kenkichi and the famous folklorist Yanagita Kunio considered Kyōzan to have been the real author. In his 1926 essay, Ichijima clearly states that the actual text of *Hokuetsu seppu* was ‘almost all written by Kyōzan … including its preface, poems, haiku, …; it was just nominally published under Bokushi’s name’. Ichijima was followed by Kōzato Haruo, who wrote a survey of commercial publications in the Tokugawa period in 1930. Kōzato described *Hokuetsu seppu* as ‘what Kyōzan wrote for Suzuki Bokushi of Echigo’. From a folklorist’s viewpoint, Yanagita similarly pays little attention to *Hokuetsu seppu*

---

because he believes that ‘it was virtually ghost-writing (*daisaku*): [Bokushi] had an agent (*hikiuke-nin*) in Edo’.  

A more positive assessment of Bokushi’s role appeared in an essay by Okada Takematsu, which was included in his popular paperback edition of *Hokuetsu seppu* in 1936. This publication set out the understanding most widely accepted up to the present: that is, that Bokushi wrote and published the book with assistance from Kyōzan in editing and from Kyōzan’s son, Kyōsui, in illustrations. Matsuda Katsumi took the same line in his 1978 essay. Takahashi Minoru then returned in 1981 to the view that ‘Kyōzan’s editorial work played a key role’ in the making of *Hokuetsu seppu*, though Bokushi ‘should still be regarded as an extraordinary person in terms of completing and publishing such a great book’. Nevertheless, Takahashi implies at the same time that *Hokuetsu seppu* should be regarded as a representation of Bokushi’s thought. Anne Walthall places more stress on Kyōzan’s role than does Takahashi: ‘*Hokuetsu seppu* is Bokushi’s creation, but without [Kyōzan’s] help, it probably never would have been published and read’. She then lists what Kyōzan did as ‘editor’, such as making editorial changes to words, sentences, style and headings; inserting ‘many pedantic allusions to Chinese and Japanese classics’; and even inventing some inaccurate landscape in pictures. Yet, content-wise, Walthall still takes it for granted that Bokushi compiled *Hokuetsu seppu*.

---

89 Masuda Katsumi, ‘*Hokuetsu seppu* no koto’, in HS-Iwanami, pp. 325-46.
91 See ibid., p. 17.
For example, to Walthall, *Hokuetsu seppu* is ‘an excellent barometer of the scientific knowledge available to the local intellectuals’. 93

Finally and most recently, a 2002 article by Tsuda Mayumi places the strongest stress on Kyōzan’s role since Ichijima’s essay in 1926. Tsuda does not doubt that Kyōzan, as a professional, rewrote all of Bokushi’s draft, and where necessary, inserted further comment on or description of various matters. 94 However, Tsuda’s short article does not specify what parts of the text are likely to have been written directly by Kyōzan, without acknowledgement of his name.

In my view, *Hokuetsu seppu* is best considered as a collaboration between Bokushi and Kyōzan, building on previous plans, and particularly on the discussion between Bokushi and Bakin over their ‘Echigo seppu’ project. Firstly, as seen in Table 6.2, the discussions between Bokushi and the various urban authors about their book projects clearly show the nature of their collaboration. Naturally, the urban professional authors took control in the joint work with Bokushi in proposing the title, genre, authorship and size of the publication. To a remarkable extent, these urban authors made it clear at an early stage of the negotiations what roles should be played by them and by Bokushi. Such strong consciousness of authorship and other roles in popular book publication confirms the ‘evolution of the author’ in early modern literature as discussed by Peter Kornicki, who points out that

93 Ibid., p. xlvi.
‘authors, compilers, editors and the like [began] to assert themselves in public in their publications’ in the late Tokugawa period.95

Table 6.2: Urban writers’ plans to publish with Bokushi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban collaborator and date of relevant letter to Bokushi</th>
<th>Book title &lt;Genre&gt;</th>
<th>Role of urban collaborator to be acknowledged in the book</th>
<th>Role of Bokushi to be acknowledged in the book</th>
<th>Other remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyōzan 1800(?) 12/1</td>
<td>‘Hokuetsu setsudan’ (Snow tales of North-Etsu)</td>
<td>‘cho’ (writing)</td>
<td>‘kō’ (checking)</td>
<td>*According to Kyōzan’s letter of 1829/10/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;*e-iri yomihon – illustrated reader &gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyokuzan 1807 2/7</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>The Akita-ya agreed to publish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakin 1818 5/17</td>
<td>‘Echigo no kuni setchū kika’ (Amazing views of the snow of Echigo Province)</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>‘kōtei’ (checking)</td>
<td>10 volumes, 80 pages each, 2 instalments (letter of 1818/2/30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakin 1818 7/29</td>
<td>‘Echigo seppu’ (Echigo snow album)</td>
<td>‘cho’ (writing)</td>
<td>‘kōtei’ (checking)</td>
<td>Later advertised in Gendō högen in 1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyōzan 1829 10/21</td>
<td>‘Echigo no kuni yuki monogatari’ (Snow tales of Echigo Province)</td>
<td>‘kyōgō’ (checking)</td>
<td>‘saku’ (writing)</td>
<td>8 volumes, 10 pages each; ‘ga’ (illustrations) by Kunisada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;kusa-zōshi – illustrated comic booklets&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyōzan 1829 9/19</td>
<td>‘Hokuetsu setchū zui’ (Collection of illustrations of the snow of North-Etsu)</td>
<td>‘kyōgō’ (checking)</td>
<td>‘cho’ (writing)</td>
<td>2 volumes, 100 pages each in first instalment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;yomihon – reader&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyōzan (Published in 1837)</td>
<td>Hokuetsu seppu – shohen (North-Etsu snow album – Part I)</td>
<td>‘santei’ (refinement)</td>
<td>‘hensen’ (compiling)</td>
<td>3 volumes, 194 pages in total including 36 pages of illustrations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is likely that Kyōzan’s contribution to the writing of Hokuetsu seppu was far more substantial than is generally thought these days. Kyōzan’s letters to Bokushi make it clear that he himself had composed the final manuscript. It was Kyōzan who ensured that Hokuetsu seppu conformed in content and textual style to the contemporary standard of urban publication. As Takahashi and others point out, there is an obvious stylistic difference between the sentences in Hokuetsu seppu and in the rest of Bokushi’s writings.\(^96\) From the viewpoint of Kyōzan as a professional author, Bokushi’s writing was evidently too clumsy. Kyōzan once wrote to Bokushi that ‘your drawings and texts are so interesting; but you are not yet familiar with how to write books (chojutsu no bunpō shudan)’.\(^97\)

Not only did he refine Bokushi’s draft; Kyōzan also suggested topics to write about in order to attract a wider audience. Kyōzan’s initial proposal, dated 1829/10/21, included a list of potential topics.\(^98\) Among these, at least twelve topics did appear in Hokuetsu seppu, such as ‘New Year’s Day in the snow’, ‘bear-hunting in the snow’, ‘a traveller’s death in the blizzard’, ‘the making of Echigo chijimi in the snow’ and ‘Echigo’s Seven Wonders’. It is thus likely that Kyōzan was responsible for the inclusion of a fair proportion

---

\(^96\) Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, pp. 35-36. Isobe Sadaji also agrees with this view. Isobe Sadaji, Suzuki Bokushi no shōsetsu (Sanjō, Niigata: Nojima shuppan, 2003), p. i.

\(^97\) ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 316.

\(^98\) Ibid., pp. 288-89.
of the major topics in *Hokuetsu seppu*. Of course it is true that Bokushi had produced many draft pictures and texts for previous projects. So it is reasonable to presume that Bokushi also had a variety of topics to offer for *Hokuetsu seppu*. Nevertheless, there was obviously a clear idea on the urban editor’s side, too, of how to represent the snow country to an urban audience.

Evidence of Kyōzan taking the lead in selecting topics also appears in his letter of 1834/12/17, which asks Bokushi for material on *chijimi* weaving as well as some snow-related topics. Apparently, *Hokuetsu seppu*’s description of *chijimi* weaving developed from the questions and directions included by Kyōzan in this letter. For example, Kyōzan tells Bokushi that ‘I would like to write about how much time and how many steps the production of a single roll of *chijimi* requires so that people will conclude that the price of *chijimi* is reasonable for such hard work’. The result was the section of *Hokuetsu seppu* entitled ‘Weaver Women’: ‘To weave an entire twenty-seven-foot length [of a roll of *chijimi*] requires 24,484 hand and foot movements. … it is literally impossible to describe all the pains and care that the weaving women devote to the long process’. Clearly, then, *Hokuetsu seppu* was not simply a representation of what Bokushi wanted to show outsiders. In part, it was also what urban authors like Kyōzan wanted to show: that is, in Kyōzan’s words, ‘something that will amaze people in Edo, Osaka and Kyoto’.  

100 HS-Iwanami, p. 75. Translation is taken from SCT, pp. 66-67.  
Works referred to in *Hokuetsu seppu* are also relevant to an assessment of the extent of Kyōzan’s input, as is the extent of Bokushi’s knowledge, particularly in science and literature. Miya, Inoue and Takahashi have listed 114 books referred to in *Hokuetsu seppu*. The range of these references would definitely impress modern readers if all of them were in the possession of Bokushi as a rural amateur writer. This is unlikely, however, although there is no clear evidence either way. As we have seen, studies show that some provincial intellectuals held excellent libraries, and Bokushi, like his neighbour friends, seems to have collected a decent number of books and documents, as discussed in Chapter Four. Still, the wide range of references and the practice of referencing itself stand out to an unusual degree in *Hokuetsu seppu* compared to Bokushi’s other literary work.

Few references to other works are found in ‘Yonabegusa’, ‘Akiyama kikō’, ‘Shōsetsu Kōdaiji odorī’ or ‘Enya hangan ichidaiki’, all of which Bokushi intended for publication. On the other hand, it was a popular practice among urban writers in this period to show off a wide range of references to other materials in the genre of *kōshō zuihitsu*, or historical and bibliographical essays. Examples include books such as *Kottōshū* (Collection of curiosities) by Kyōden and *Gendō hōgen* by Bakin. In the Table of Contents of *Kottōshū*, Part I (1813), Kyōden states that he refers to

---

more than 350 books as primary sources.\textsuperscript{103} He also inserts details of cited work in every relevant place. In Bakin’s \textit{Gendō högen} of 1818, a bibliography of 298 cited books is attached to the Table of Contents.\textsuperscript{104} Kyōzan was another Edo writer in a similar mould, making it likely that it was he who inserted the references in \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} to other works. He worked closely with other authors who followed this practice. For example, it was Kyōzan’s intention to publish a sequel to \textit{Kottōshū}, using materials left by his deceased brother.\textsuperscript{105} He was also associated with a study group led by Oyamada Tomokiyo (1783-1847), a \textit{kokugaku} scholar, who was famous for his enormous library collection of 50,000 volumes.\textsuperscript{106}

In addition to this circumstantial evidence, Kyōzan’s letters to Bokushi further suggest that it was Kyōzan who took primary responsibility for inserting references to other works.\textsuperscript{107} Kyōzan’s editorial advice makes no mention at all of the parts of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} where the text displays general knowledge about scientific, lexical or historical subjects, suggesting that these sections had not been drafted by Bokushi. Kyōzan’s advice mainly covers the local folkloristic episodes that apparently were contributed by Bokushi. There is no correction or advice from Kyōzan to Bokushi on matters of citation either. If Kyōzan’s responsibility had been limited to refinement of existing material, there would almost certainly have been many such amendments and suggestions.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{104} Kyukutei Bakin, ‘Gendō högen’, pp. 11-16.
\item \textsuperscript{105} ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in \textit{SBZ2}, p. 352.
\item \textsuperscript{106} For Kyōzan’s relationship with Tomokiyo, see Mayama, \textit{Zuihitsu Takizawa Bakin}, p. 104; Okamura Keiji, \textit{Edo no zōshokatachi} (Kōdansha, 1996), pp. 14-15, 19-21, 169.
\item \textsuperscript{107} ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in \textit{SBZ2}, pp. 278-356.
\end{itemize}
Thus it seems fair to conclude that some sections of *Hokuetsu seppu* Part I were directly written by Kyōzan, with no draft by Bokushi. I would suppose that one such section is the very beginning of *Hokuetsu seppu* Part I, which displays the author’s knowledge of meteorology and the Chinese classics in relation to snowfalls, including information on ‘how the earth’s vapours become snow’ and ‘shapes of snowflakes’.\(^{108}\) One particular part is the pages shown in Figure 6.4. As noted in the main text of *Hokuetsu seppu*, the illustrations of snowflakes were copied from an 1832 publication, *Sekka zusetsu* (An illustrated note about snowflakes), a research essay by Doi Toshitsura (1789-1848), the daimyo of Koga domain in Shimōsa Province, and his councillor, Takami Senseki (1785-1858). It is likely that Kyōzan noticed this recent study, relevant to his book project with Bokushi, and obtained a copy of the publication in Edo. In fact, a letter from Kyōzan dated 1835/9/9 reveals that the illustrations were actually drawn by Kyōzan’s son Kyōsui, but Kyōzan and Kyōsui decided to use Bokushi’s name in order to impress readers with Bokushi’s skill in illustration.\(^{109}\)

---

\(^{108}\) See HS-Iwanami, pp. 17-22; SCT, pp. 3-8.

Given such ambiguities, we should be cautious about accepting the view that *Hokuetsu seppu* represents the level of scientific and literary knowledge available to rural intellectuals in Japan in the early nineteenth century.

How, then, should we assess the roles of Bokushi and Kyōzan in the realization of *Hokuetsu seppu*? Two facts have contributed to confusion in discussions of their roles. The first is that the text of *Hokuetsu seppu* is apparently narrated by Bokushi in the first person, except for supplementary sections in Part II which are conspicuously marked ‘Momoki [Kyōzan] says’.\(^{110}\) It is clear in the text that ‘I’ means Bokushi and ‘my country’ (*wagakuni*) means Echigo. The second point is that the publication identified the official role of Bokushi as ‘hensen’ or ‘compilation’ and that of Kyōzan as ‘santei’ or ‘refinement’ in Part I, and ‘zōshū’ or ‘supplementation’ in Part II. These ‘official’ roles are potentially

---

\(^{110}\) ‘Momoki’ was another name used by Kyōzan.
contradicted by the fact that Kyōzan referred to his own job using the word ‘daisaku’ in his letters to Bokushi.\textsuperscript{111} ‘Daisaku’ normally means ‘writing for someone else’, or ‘ghost-writing’ in modern parlance. It is not entirely clear, however, what the actual meaning of ‘daisaku’ was in those days or, more specifically, in the context of urban writers’ often humorous usage.

In my assessment, Bokushi and Kyōzan are best described as collaborators who played different roles, supplementing each other and making use of each other. They were not simply a ghost-writer and his client, nor a proof-reader and the author. Examination of Kyōzan’s letters to Bokushi reveals a much more interactive relationship, as summarized in Table 6.3 below.

\textbf{Table 6.3: The Development of the Kyōzan-Bokushi project to produce \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Month</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830/9</td>
<td>Kyōzan accepts Bokushi’s request to take over from Bakin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831/3</td>
<td>Bokushi starts sending pictures and texts to Kyōzan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834/12</td>
<td>Kyōzan makes a request for a writing fee of five ryō.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835/1</td>
<td>Bokushi pays Kyōzan five ryō.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1835/3     | Kyōzan’s manuscript (tanebon) progresses.  
              | Kyōzan meets with Bakin and asks for his support. |
| 1835/4–7?  | The Chōji-ya accepts Kyōzan’s publication proposal for \textit{Hokuetsu sesshi}.  
              | Kyōzan sends Bokushi the manuscript of the first volume, and Bokushi gives his feedback (saikō). The second volume follows. |
| (Letters  |              |
| missing)   |              |
| 1835/8     | Kyōzan completes the manuscript of the third volume, and sends it to Bokushi. |
| 1835/9     | Bokushi pays Kyōzan five ryō for his work.  
              | Kyōzan receives Bokushi’s feedback on the second volume.  
              | Kyōzan tells Bokushi that an advertising leaflet will soon be printed and distributed to bookstores in Edo.  
              | The Chōji-ya proposes a change of title to \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}, and Kyōzan accepts.  
              | The Chōji-ya undertakes to publish the book in the first month of 1836. |

\textsuperscript{111} ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 336, 339.
The collaboration between Bokushi and Kyōzan proceeded as follows. The first and most important step was to produce a manuscript of the book, called ‘tanebon’, which was to be used in discussions with publishers as well as in the application to the bakufu authority for a publication licence. Bokushi’s main contribution was to supply pictures and explanatory text for the manuscript. Kyōzan repeatedly stressed the importance of the quality of the manuscript in persuading a publisher to adopt their book project. He said that unlike routine publications such as examples of gesaku fiction, the publisher would review the manuscript critically from the point of view of calculating costs, in addition to considering content and appearance from the viewpoint of marketability.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 306-07.}

We do not know how the manuscript was received by the publisher, Chōji-ya, because none of Kyōzan’s letters survives from that very crucial period. But it is evident that each of the three volumes of the manuscript was sent to Bokushi as soon as Kyōzan had completed it. Then Bokushi gave feedback on the manuscript to Kyōzan. They called this process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835/10</td>
<td>- Kyōzan receives Bokushi’s feedback on the third volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Kyōzan and Bokushi discuss the ‘preface’ and ‘end-of-book advertisement’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835/11</td>
<td>- Kyōsui’s illustrations are completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Woodblock engraving starts for the first volume. Kyōzan proofreads the third volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836/1</td>
<td>- Woodblocks of the first volume are nearly complete. A fair copy of the second volume is to be proofread. The fair copy of the third volume is not yet finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836/5</td>
<td>- Kyōzan receives a proof copy of the first volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Kyōzan and Kyōsui go on a trip to Echigo to meet with Bokushi for the first time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2.
‘saikō’ (review). Bokushi’s feedback seems to have been very meticulous. For example, his comments on the second volume were spread over four bundles of letters.\textsuperscript{113} Kyōzan then wrote back to Bokushi, accepting some of his points and declining others with detailed explanations.\textsuperscript{114} After Kyōzan had refined the manuscript, each volume was passed on to a copyist (\textit{hikkō}), who made a fair copy. Subsequently, the fair copy was proofread by Kyōzan, before being sent to a woodblock engraver (\textit{horishi}). The final job of the authors in the production process was to inspect a proof copy from the woodblocks. The proof copy of the first volume of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} was brought to Bokushi by Kyōzan on his trip to Echigo in 1836. This was the first time that the two had actually met. However, Bokushi’s final check seemingly had little effect on the publisher in Edo. After publication, Bokushi jotted down on his copy of the first print of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} a complaint about the many misprints in the book. He says they happened because ‘the publisher rushed into print before completing proofreading’.\textsuperscript{115}

This process of collaboration displays both Bokushi’s capacity and the limits of his participation in the publication of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu}. Firstly, Bokushi’s subordination to Kyōzan in terms of power over the shaping of the publication is clear. A remark by Kyōzan about their roles in this project is suggestive. Kyōzan wittily compares Bokushi’s role to that of a supplier of ‘all delicacies from the province’ of Echigo and his own role to that of ‘a chef in Edo’ who prepares a gourmet dinner with a full range of

\begin{itemize}
\item 113 Ibid., p. 323.
\item 114 For the best example, see ibid., pp. 323-26.
\item 115 ‘Kaidai’, in SBZ2, p. 405.
\end{itemize}

380
dishes ‘for patrons not only in Edo but also from Osaka and Kyoto, choosing ingredients from all those delicacies and seasoning them to the patrons’ taste’. In addition to Kyōzan’s market-oriented editing policy, this comment indicates his view of who was ultimately in charge of writing the book. As Takahashi points out, this relationship — between the supplier of material and the arranger of material — was confirmed in the processes of choosing illustrations, eliminating irrelevant topics and editing texts, all of which were undertaken by Kyōzan.117

Within these limits, though, Bokushi’s intellectual and artistic capabilities deserve special attention. For Kyōzan, the most helpful of Bokushi’s contributions were his drawings. Right after completing the manuscript, Kyōzan reflected on the whole process, telling Bokushi that ‘this project has been realized because you could draw pictures. … I would not have been able to complete this book without those’.118 Bokushi’s drawings greatly helped Kyōzan to compose the text, although the actual number of illustrations in Hokuetsu seppu was restricted due to the cost of producing woodblocks.119

Bokushi’s role in the interchange of ideas between the two writers should not be neglected either. The length and detail of Kyōzan’s comments on Bokushi’s material suggest an active relationship between them. Bokushi did not leave everything to Kyōzan, but remained engaged with the development of the book throughout the process of its publication. While they differed widely in their experience and knowledge of

117 Takahashi, Hokuetsu seppu no shisō, pp. 33-38.
119 Ibid., p. 306.
commercial publication, as well as in their geo-cultural backgrounds, Bokushi and Kyōzan were nevertheless able literally to ‘co-produce’ *Hokuetsu seppu*. A letter from Kyōzan to Bokushi dated 1835/1/24 conveys Kyōzan’s sense of satisfaction about Bokushi’s material.

Last night, I read your draft from [ten o’clock] to [one o’clock] on my bed. It is very interesting. As you made it like a book, it is very easy for me to read. From now on, you don’t need to write explanations of the pictures. Just write it like a tale and send it to me. … I was quite excited last night while reading the draft. I was saying to myself such things as ‘Well, I’ll write this part like this’, ‘this picture will be a good illustration if redrawn in this way’.  

The active exchange of draft material and comments probably improved Bokushi’s skills in writing and drawing from the point of view of commercial publication.

Meanwhile, besides his intellectual and artistic capabilities, Bokushi’s financial power also contributed much to the realization of *Hokuetsu seppu*. This fact further suggests, first, one major constraint on the acceptance of publication proposals submitted by provincial literati, and, second, their capacity and willingness to spend substantial amounts of money on cultural pursuits. According to Kyōzan, in order to gain acceptance of the book proposal from the Chōji-ya, he needed to make a special offer to lessen the financial risk of publication: that is, the publisher would pay nothing for the writing or illustrations, and Bokushi would place

---

120 Ibid., pp. 318-19. I have converted times to the modern system.

382
an advance order for fifty copies. This was probably the reality faced by those who proposed such books in the publication industry in the early nineteenth century. On the purchase of fifty copies of Part I of *Hokuetsu seppu*, Bokushi possibly spent as much as twenty-eight ryō, roughly equivalent to the value of twenty-five koku of rice in Shiozawa in 1836. Bokushi also paid Kyōzan ten ryō for text-editing and his son, Kyōsui, 2,000 mon for illustrations, after Kyōzan had hesitantly requested such payment. Bokushi further offered two shu to the person who had introduced them to the publisher. Kyōzan admitted that Bokushi’s ‘power of the purse’ (*kane no hikari*) enabled *Hokuetsu seppu* to be published in the end.

Bokushi’s role in the production of *Hokuetsu seppu* should also be considered from the point of view of the publisher, and specifically the actual status of this rural author in the Edo publication industry. It is clear from Kyōzan’s letters that it was not Bokushi but Kyōzan who exercised the

---

121 Ibid., p. 333.
122 The price of *Hokuetsu seppu* Part I is not clear. Takahashi assumes it was thirteen *monme* five *bu* (0.225 ryō) (Takahashi Minoru, *Suzuki Bokushi: yukiguni no fūdo to bunka*, Niigata: Niigataken kyōikuinkai, 1985, p. 37). This price, however, seems to me too cheap when compared with Bakin’s note of the price (0.7 ryō) of his *Gendō hōgen*, which was comparable to *Hokuetsu seppu* Part I in size and genre. (See ‘Takizawa Bakin shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 204-05.) Meanwhile, a letter from Kyōzan to Bokushi suggests a customary twenty-per-cent discount for book-lenders. (‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 281.) If we take these figures into account, the cost of fifty copies of *Hokuetsu seppu* Part I for Bokushi could be estimated at twenty-eight ryō.
123 See Appendix.
124 See ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, pp. 316-18, 323, 341, 344. Previous studies such as Takahashi’s *Suzuki Bokushi* state that Bokushi paid Kyōzan five ryō for editing (p. 37). However, according to the pages above, the initial payment of five ryō was made in the first month of 1835, and then another five ryō were paid in the ninth month of that year.
126 Ibid., p. 333.
full rights of the author of *Hokuetsu seppu* in all negotiations with the publisher, Chōji-ya. For example, on 1835/9/20, a clerk from the Chōji-ya came and asked Kyōzan about the possibility of changing the title of the book from ‘*Hokuetsu sesshi*’ to ‘*Hokuetsu seppu*’. For promotional purposes, the publisher preferred ‘*seppu*’ because the title ‘Echigo seppu’ had previously been advertised widely in Chōji-ya publications as a forthcoming book by Bakin with Bokushi’s co-operation. Kyōzan instantly accepted the suggestion, without consulting Bokushi.127 The title of Bokushi’s life-work was in fact decided by his collaborator and publisher in Edo, his supposed primary authorship notwithstanding. There is no indication, either, that he complained about this procedure or the new title. The exercise of full authority by Kyōzan seems to have been inevitable, given Bokushi’s geographic position, inexperience in publication and obscurity as a writer, compared to Kyōzan.

The publisher’s assessment of the two authors, Bokushi and Kyōzan, from the viewpoint of marketing strategy, is reflected in the inside cover-page layout of *Hokuetsu seppu* (see Figure 6.5).128 In the first print of Part I of the book in 1837, Bokushi’s primary authorship was not conspicuously exhibited on the cover page in terms of the size of characters, in clear contrast with Kyōzan’s prominence. After Part I was well received in the market, the first print of Part II in 1842 used characters of the same size in displaying the names of Bokushi, Kyōzan and Kyōsui. Today’s publishers of this work tend to impress upon readers the fact that an obscure member

---

127 Ibid., p. 329.
128 As was typical of premodern publications, the cover page of *Hokuetsu seppu* bore no printing, but had a strip pasted on the paper showing the title. See Figure 6.1.
of the provincial literati wrote the book in the 1830s; however, that was probably not the main concern in the marketing strategies of the Edo publishers, who were more focussed on using famous names to gain the attention of bookshops, book-lenders and general readers.

Figure 6.5: Inside cover pages of the first print of Part I of *Hokuetsu seppu* in 1837 (right) and of Part II in 1842 (left)

Source: SBZ2, p. 405.

Finally, it is important to examine how readers received the publication. All evidence suggests the considerable success of *Hokuetsu seppu*, at least of Part I. Bokushi proudly wrote that Part I had been ‘ranked komusubi on a publication billboard print (*banzuke*) in Edo’, which means that the book was highly ranked, just after the first place for the year. Kyōzan wrote in the ‘Preface’ to Part II that Part I had sold ‘more than 700 copies upon its publication’ and ‘thus, the publisher asked for a sequel’. Even Bakin acknowledged the good reputation of Part I, in a letter to a literary friend in Ise. He wrote on 1837/10/22: ‘the Chōji-ya told me that so

---

129 In Bokushi’s ‘Preface’ to ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 277. It is not known which publication Bokushi was referring to.
130 HS-Iwanami, p. 166.
far 450 copies have been distributed into the market. By now, this book may have arrived in your town’.\textsuperscript{131} Letters from Kyōzan suggest that \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} was expected be purchased mainly by book-lenders, and would then be read by a great many urban-dwellers.\textsuperscript{132} The sale of more than 500 copies to book-lenders was impressive. Even in the case of Bakin’s multi-volume best-seller, \textit{Nansō Satomi hakkenden}, Bakin made a special note in his diary when the ‘production of [a new volume] reached 500 copies’ due to great demand in Edo and Osaka.\textsuperscript{133} The popularity of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} continued. One researcher has confirmed that at least seven different print-runs of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} were published by the Chōji-ya before the end of the Tokugawa period.\textsuperscript{134}

Kyōzan’s strategy to present Bokushi as a native reporter from the snow country seems to have been successful in persuading an urban audience, even intellectuals. In 1841, Matsuzaki Kōdō (1771-1844), a famous Confucian scholar, recorded the work in his reading journal as ‘\textit{Seppu}, written by Suzuki Bokushi of Uonuma, Echigo’.\textsuperscript{135} Bokushi was also recognized as the sole author of \textit{Hokuetsu seppu} in \textit{Bukō nenpō hoseiryaku} (A chronicle of Edo city, revised edition published ca 1850) by Kitamura Intei (1783-1856), as well as in \textit{Tonegawa zushi} (Gazetteer of the

\textsuperscript{132} See ‘Santō Kyōzan shokanshū’, in SBZ2, p. 325.
\textsuperscript{134} NKS-T, vol. 5, p. 627.
\textsuperscript{135} Miya Eiji, ‘\textit{Hokuetsu seppu} no dekiru made’, in Miya Eiji (ed.), \textit{Zusetsu Hokuetsu seppu jiten} (Kadokawa shoten, 1982), p. 122.
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

Tone River region, published in 1858) by Akamatsu Sōtan (1806-62). To Bakin, however, Kyōzan’s decision to present himself as a kind of editor rather than as author seemed to be a way to avoid direct criticism from urban intellectual readers if the book turned out to contain incorrect information.137

In the end, the whole process of publishing Hokuetsu seppu probably evoked mixed feelings in Bokushi: both jubilation and resignation. As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, he was so proud of his achievement that he claimed he would have ‘no regret even if I died now’. On the other hand, he must have become aware that there were various barriers he could not overcome. As one piece of evidence for this, there is his note on his own copy of the first print of Hokuetsu seppu, Part I: ‘kono dan yo hitori fufuku’ (I alone was unhappy with this section), as shown below in Figure 6.6.138

---

138 This section recounts the episode of ‘Hunting Deer in the Snow’. HS-Iwanami, pp. 151-52; SCT, pp. 145-46.
The reason for his dissatisfaction with this part of the text is not clear to me. Nevertheless, his words ‘I alone was unhappy’ imply that a previous request to Kyōzan to review this part had been rejected. Kyōzan may have said that other people also supported his view, or argued that he knew better than Bokushi how to appeal to a general audience. In any event, it appears that the rural amateur writer, Bokushi, did not have the power to override the decision made by his urban collaborator in this case, and probably in many others.

* * * * * * *

_Hokuetsu seppu_ can ultimately be understood as the joint product of one rural person’s intellectual endeavour and the growing dynamism in print culture of the Tokugawa-period metropolises. Bokushi and Kyōzan, whom I consider to be co-authors, are representative of their fellow literati at each end in respect of their intellectual interests, cultural ambitions, and
knowledge and experience in publication. Bokushi’s ambition to publish a book developed against the backdrop of the increasing involvement in print culture of provincial practitioners of the arts, their growing interest in writing in general, and their specific desire to write about their own regions. Kyōzan’s approach to Bokushi, on the other hand, reflects the metropolitan authors’ quest for a wider range of literary topics and themes in the competitive environment of the publication industry by that time.

The significance of their joint effort in publishing *Hokuetsu seppu* is twofold. On the one hand, the collaboration indicates the building of a bridge between the urban and the rural in cultural activities such as publishing books, and, on the other, it shows the continuing gap between the two in knowledge of the literary world and experience of publication. The ‘bridge’ is represented by the vigorous correspondence between Bokushi and Kyōzan as well as that between Bokushi and Bakin. These two sets of correspondence provide ample evidence of the existence of common ground on which the rural and urban writers could interact with each other. Moreover, this growing flow of communication and information in itself was an important factor in establishing and extending such common ground. The increase in opportunities for cultural engagement between urban and rural practitioners of the arts was another such factor. The appearance of the names of rural and urban authors side-by-side in the pages of *Hokuetsu seppu* is symbolic of the development of urban-rural cultural relationships in Tokugawa Japan.

Equally importantly, the letters from Kyōzan and Bakin to Bokushi show the persistence of a considerable gap between the Edo professional
authors and the rural amateur in knowledge of literature and of the publishing business. Even Kyōzan, who offered to give credit to Bokushi as primary author, took control of the selection of stories, writing style and textual presentation, including illustrations. If the book had been produced with Bakin as had been long intended, Bokushi’s overt presence in the text would have been insignificant. It is evident from Kyōzan’s and Bakin’s letters that writing for commercial publication was perceived as a different task from writing for the author’s own interest or for private publication. To overcome the gap between the private text and commercial publication, Bokushi needed to follow Kyōzan’s advice, although there was room for negotiation and discussion. Bokushi’s contribution to the costs of Kyōzan’s manuscript production and to the publisher’s expenses was probably also necessary.

Because of the fact of such extensive collaboration between Bokushi and Kyōzan, *Hokuetsu seppu* cannot simply be seen as a text produced by a rural writer. From the viewpoint of influence from a number of urban authors, many of Bokushi’s writings — not only *Hokuetsu seppu* but also ‘Akiyama kikō’ and other works — are more problematic to interpret than the private texts produced by other rural intellectuals, including their diaries and ethnographic accounts. Draft materials produced by Bokushi for *Hokuetsu seppu* have not been found, even in his family library. Even if the draft materials did exist, it would still be difficult to see them simply as an ethnographic record by a local resident. Bokushi had been influenced by urban authors for a long period of time. Because of a series of misfortunes, he had to prepare different sets of draft materials under their guidance as
many as five times. But in a sense, that was a process that gradually taught him how to produce more attractive material for urban readers. It certainly means that *Hokuetsu seppu* is no straightforward record of rural life.

In addition, Bokushi’s experience in publishing a book reflects a variety of historical contingencies. While recognizing that the emergence of a book like *Hokuetsu seppu* in the central arena of literature was the result of identifiable historical trends, we also see in the pathway from Bokushi’s original idea to the actual publication of the book a great many human factors and unforeseen happenings. Those I have identified in the negotiation process between Bokushi and his urban partners include sudden deaths, rivalry, hatred, distrust, and, most of all, self-interest. Bokushi’s dream of publication could have had a different outcome if any single incident had happened differently. There was a considerable likelihood that his draft materials might never have crystallized into a published book. For one thing, *Hokuetsu seppu* was hardly a risk-free project for a publisher. For the urban authors too, it was a difficult task to bring to fruition. Even Kyōzan spent four years completing the manuscript of Part I, despite his initial enthusiasm. This clearly suggests that the Bokushi-Kyōzan project could well have failed, as had the proposed publications with Bakin and Kyōden.

Individual idiosyncrasies also played a key role in the materialization of *Hokuetsu seppu*. Bokushi’s proud ‘patience and endurance’ were certainly advantageous in maintaining his determination over four decades to publish a book, despite repeated failures and misfortunes. It is further evident, however, that Bokushi was not always
passively patient, but sometimes acted in a highly strategic manner in negotiating with his urban partners, as seen in his communications in the triangular relationship with Bakin and Kyōzan. Moreover, it is evident that his personal desire for fame drove him to take advantage of the cultural transformations of the late Tokugawa period to bring his ‘snow tales’ project to fruition.
CONCLUSION

In 1839, nearly at the end of his life, Bokushi several times compared himself to ‘a bat in a village with no birds’ (*tori naki sato no kōmori*).\(^1\) The phrase means that a petty person reigns supreme where no great person exists;\(^2\) a rough English equivalent might be ‘in the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king’. I think the phrase Bokushi chose may be an appropriate metaphor for his life in the sense that it points to his distinctive abilities among rural residents, and yet intrinsic limitations as a Tokugawa-period provincial person living in a relatively remote area. In his own community, Bokushi stood out economically, culturally and politically, like something flying in the sky. However, having obtained a broader perspective by ‘flying in the sky’, he perhaps came to realize his limits in comparison with others outside his own community, whose wealth, knowledge, artistic and literary skills, social networks and political power must have seemed far greater than his. Crossing boundaries caused him to reconfirm the existence of boundaries.

This thesis has highlighted Bokushi’s abilities and limitations in relation to his negotiation of the various frameworks embedded in Tokugawa society. The major significance of the thesis is in showing through Bokushi’s texts and experiences that Tokugawa-period social frameworks had a much greater malleability than has previously been perceived, and yet retained a stubborn rigidity. Bokushi’s life is chiefly

\(^1\) Bokushi used this phase twice in ‘Isho’ (Final testament), and once in an 1839 letter. Miya Eiji, Inoue Keiryū and Takahashi Minoru (comps), *Suzuki Bokushi zenshū* (2 vols, hereafter SBZ1 and SBZ2), vol. 1 (Chūō kōronsha, 1983), pp. 899, 914 (‘Isho’) and p. 978 (‘Shokan’).

relevant to the following four aspects of Tokugawa society: the overall rural-urban distinction, the established social order, cultural divisions, and family structure.

Issues relating to the rural-urban distinction have been examined throughout the thesis. In the educational opportunities available to him and in his letter-writing network, Bokushi most strongly displayed the permeability of the rural-urban boundary. His terakoya education from 1777, art tuition by an Edo painter travelling to Echigo in 1783, and attendance at Sawada Tōkō’s calligraphy school in Edo in 1788 exceed the normal expectation of educational opportunities available to rural boys in this period. Even more surprising is Bokushi’s highly developed correspondence network, which encompassed many provinces and involved a number of well-known urban figures, as described in Chapter Five. Bokushi’s opportunities for travel and access to books and to social and political news are also noteworthy, even though he was not necessarily an unusual example in these areas. Economic activities that crossed the urban-rural border have also been identified in Bokushi’s region, though not directly in relation to his own business. Without doubt, all these aspects of Bokushi’s life undermine previous emphases on the geographic and political segregation of Japanese provinces from the centre and from each other, a perception deriving from a dominant focus on the baku-han system.

Paradoxically, however, the rise in mobility of people between the cities and the provinces as travellers, merchants, seasonal labourers, migrants, pupils or teachers, as well as the increase in flow of commodities, information and knowledge, made rural people conscious of themselves as
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

provincials, and also brought rural culture to the attention of urban people. In other words, exchange between the cities and the provinces reified ‘rurality’. In the provinces, those who developed a broader perspective by crossing urban-rural boundaries reified ruralism through the process of self-reflection, influenced by urban people’s attitudes towards the countryside. To urban residents, rurality became increasingly tangible in various forms, such as the dialects and the odd appearance of migrant labourers and tourists from the countryside, the availability of local specialities imported from specific regions, and the depictions of unusual scenery, surprising natural conditions and strange customs in remote areas that appeared in popular publications. At this intersection between the rural and the urban, Bokushi’s enquiry about the possibility of publishing a book centring on his region meshed with some urban writers’ interest in the ‘snow country’ as a literary theme.

In terms of the social order, Bokushi’s life testifies to both the malleability and the rigidity of the social frameworks of the Tokugawa period. Bokushi’s connections with samurai, including a few daimyo and some bakufu or han officials, certainly indicate that people’s social status was not as rigidly tied to the shi-nō-kō-shō classification as has previously been believed. ‘Fūryū’, or ‘aesthetics’, was a kind of trump card that increased the permeability of status boundaries, especially between samurai and commoners. However, the ‘fūryū’ connection did not transcend the existing political order for Bokushi; it is even possible that such opportunities as meetings with daimyo and bakufu or han officials reinforced Bokushi’s appreciation of the status quo. When Bokushi
considered a poem written by a high-ranking samurai poet, it is unlikely that he evaluated it purely on its aesthetic merit. For ‘holograph’ collectors like Bokushi, moreover, the question of who had produced a particular work in his or her own hand must often have been more significant than its aesthetic quality. In Bokushi’s perspective, ‘worldly’ status was important not only for samurai poets, but also for priests and others. Thus, once again, the crossing of boundaries had a paradoxical effect in reifying social status in tangible terms. Bokushi appreciated literary and artistic works produced by a person of high status politically or culturally, because he accepted that he was of lower status than that person.

As for cultural divisions in Tokugawa society, issues relating to the publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* on the one hand constitute excellent evidence of the potential of the rural elite to cross the cultural boundaries between the world of urban publishing and that of amateur practitioners of the arts, and, on the other, indicate the limits of this mobility and the difficulties that amateur writers faced in their cultural pursuits. As I have emphasized, *Hokuetsu seppu* is a very significant example, and arguably the best example, of a literary production demonstrating the burgeoning potential for collaboration between urban and rural writers. The whole process from Bokushi’s first enquiry to Kyōden to the actual publication of *Hokuetsu seppu* encompasses a wide variety of interaction between the ‘urban’ and the ‘rural’. Bokushi’s approaches to Kyōden, Bakin, Gyokuzan, Fuyō and subsequently to Kyōzan all demonstrate his own enthusiasm for participating in the central arena of literary production. Urban writers came closer to the ‘rural’ too: some physically, through travel, and others by using
it as a topic in their work. Many rural practitioners of the arts were aware of this trend in contemporary literature. Some of them, including Bokushi, eventually wanted more than to be passive recipients of urban culture. Bokushi, at least, was capable of approaching urban professionals because haikai activities had already provided him with useful experience in communicating with famous poets.

I have also shown that, in negotiating with his urban collaborators, especially in the triangular relationship with Bakin and Kyōzan, Bokushi deployed his skills quite tactically. This was only possible, firstly, because he was capable of producing useful materials of decent quality for the urban writers, especially pictures, and, secondly, because his communication skills in letter-writing were sophisticated enough for his correspondents. Thus, his correspondence network formed an important foundation of his later literary work, not only in enabling him to develop valuable contacts, but also in refining the skills he needed in order to approach his potential collaborators.

It is also clear, however, that not Bokushi but Kyōzan was in control of the process of producing Hokuetsu seppu, notwithstanding the way in which the roles of the two authors were specified in the publication itself. Uonuma region was presented as the exotic snow country in the book, and Bokushi was identified as its native narrator. On the other hand, as we have seen in Chapter Six, Kyōzan was aware that he was the producer of the book, or in his words, ‘a chef in Edo who prepares a gourmet dinner’ for urban people, using rare ingredients sent by Bokushi from Echigo.3 Bokushi

---

undoubtedly did his best as an amateur writer and illustrator participating in the project from a far province. But there were certainly limits to his participation, especially because of the imbalance in cultural power between urban professionals and rural amateurs, because of social and personal constraints on cultural pursuits, because of personal circumstances such as age, and because of geographical position.

Lastly, I have also highlighted Bokushi’s eagerness and capacity to reinforce the principle of the household within his family. He emphasized pride in the family lineage and established status in the community, the importance of continuing devotion to the family business, and the virtue of frugality and familial harmony. In this effort he exemplified the elite farmer-merchants, who had adopted certain values formerly developed by upper-class samurai and city-based wealthy merchants. However, I have shown that Bokushi’s family life contained many tribulations and disagreements among members. Bokushi’s own values and lifestyle were not always accepted by other members of the household. People acted differently due to their personal attributes, interests and relationships with others. At the time of writing ‘Isho’ after long conflict with his successor, Kan’emon, Bokushi probably felt that he had failed to establish himself as a distinguished family head, respected and worshipped by his immediate family members and destined to be revered in the future by his descendants. We can presume that Bokushi was one of a great many elderly retirees, in all social classes, who were unhappy at the increasing gap between what they had hoped would happen and what was actually happening in their households. Nonetheless, Bokushi’s ‘Isho’ is one of only a small number of
surviving and published documents recording the voices of such unhappy elderly people in Tokugawa society.

Bokushi’s description of himself as a ‘bat’ also indicates the particular situation in which he found himself in the midst of the attempt by members of the rural elite to reconceptualise their lives in the changing rural environment. Bats occupy an ambiguous position, between animals on the ground and those in the sky, as did the rural elite in the Tokugawa status system. This thesis has discussed the ambiguous middle position of the rural elite and of their rural towns. The term Bokushi used, ‘shinshōmochi’ or ‘the propertied’, refers to a new economic identity separating the class to which his family belonged from other villagers. Ryoro’s term, ‘chōka hyakushō’ or ‘townsman-farmers’, clearly specifies the duality of the consciousness of elite families in rural towns in relation to their status and lifestyle. The so-called ‘gyōyo fūgaron’, or the policy of restricting cultural activities to leisure time only, also created a space in which Bokushi could allow himself to spend time on cultural pursuits. Thus he differentiated himself from cultural experts on the one hand, who devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the arts, and uneducated people on the other. The title of his autobiographical essay, ‘Yonabegusa’ (Notes while burning the midnight oil), may also indicate Bokushi’s self-discipline in keeping his distance from the leisured class. The title is obviously associated with the famous fourteenth-century essay, Tsurezuregusa (Essays in idleness), which was written by an aristocrat priest, Yoshida Kenkō (ca 1283-?). Bokushi’s own title literally means ‘night-work jottings’, whereas Tsurezuregusa means ‘jottings as my mind goes’.

399
Arguably, all these efforts by Bokushi and other members of the rural elite to create their own code of behaviour and lifestyle exhibit the formation of a new social grouping which does not fit within the usual perceptions of Tokugawa social status. Most challengingly in terms of the conventional picture, this grouping both matches and contradicts several terms of classification at the same time. Traits associated with both farmers and merchants coexisted in their lives, but were weaker than was the case for either actual cultivators or town-based merchants. Bokushi and his fellow elite villagers were proud of their samurai lineages and many gained pseudo-samurai status. Experience in village administration and access to educational opportunities also narrowed the gap between samurai and these rural leaders. Nevertheless, the division between them undoubtedly remained. Similarly, the rural elite display in part, but not fully, an urban pattern of cultural activities, lifestyle, and access to information. The usual image of ‘bunjin’ or ‘literati’ does not fit Bokushi perfectly, because he did not allow himself to be idle during the working days, but rather disciplined himself to be frugal and productive. Bokushi’s life thus complicates our understanding of Tokugawa society and defies conventional norms of classification. The ambiguity in social grouping represented by Bokushi was a crucial indicator of the flexibility of social structure, one important factor that contributed to Japan’s rapid transformation towards a modern society after Bokushi’s day.

In addition to the points summarized above, the findings of this thesis contribute to current historical studies in the following areas. Most broadly, the thesis adds a case study of an individual life that was rich in
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

complexity in terms of interactions with various aspects of the external environment. I have demonstrated, firstly, that to a great degree Bokushi’s life was affected by the social, economic and cultural transformation of the rural community in the late Tokugawa period. Secondly, Bokushi was engaged in a wide range of human relationships, among which the most intricate were those with his wives, his son-in-law Kan’emon, and the Edo writers Bakin and Kyōzan. Bokushi’s relationships with his father, Jōemon, and brother-in-law, Ryoro, were also crucial to his development as a member of the rural elite and a practitioner of the arts. Bokushi’s extended cultural networks further influenced various aspects of his life in important ways. Thirdly, I have shown through Bokushi that one person’s life in the past could be as multifaceted as modern lives are, in terms of fields of interest and involvement. His occupation was just one aspect of Bokushi’s life, and similarly his political status, familial role and cultural profile each reveals only part of his activity and attitudes. This study is also distinctive in dealing with the life of a ‘non-central’ figure in terms of politics, culture and geography, who lived in a period from which relatively few historical materials have survived.

In terms of our understanding of early modern Japan, I offer further evidence of the liveliness and dynamism of Tokugawa society. Adding to previous knowledge of people’s vigorous activities in early modern cities such as Edo and Osaka, the thesis has demonstrated that the rural region of Uonuma and its residents also experienced significant social change of various kinds. As we have seen, Bokushi and the people around him witnessed, for example, the spread of the money economy, the diffusion of
basic education, the popularization of cultural activities such as *haikai*-writing, an increase in opportunities to travel beyond the region and to meet with people from other places, and a growing access to information and print media. The evidence of such dynamism in Uonuma in Bokushi’s day provides important confirmation that there was a significant increase in the links between the metropolises and the provinces in economy, culture and other areas of social life.

Bokushi’s texts also suggest that rural commoners’ political connections were not necessarily limited to one samurai authority, either the bakufu or a han, but were potentially multiple. To Bokushi, Aizu han was in practice the prime authority because of his involvement in village administration and tax payment, both of which were areas supervised by the han. Bokushi’s own political status in his community was raised by the han authority because of his financial contribution to Aizu han, his assistance in various ways to the Shiozawa community, and his good relationship with the specific han officials of his day. But he never went to the castle-town of Aizu; nor did he meet with Aizu samurai other than those officials who had been dispatched to Uonuma. On the other hand, Bokushi did regularly have the chance to meet with the daimyo of Muramatsu han, who awarded him and his father the privilege of doing so, in acknowledgement of the commercial services provided by the Suzukis to Muramatsu han. Bokushi also enjoyed an ‘aesthetic’ relationship with the daimyo and some vassals of Nagaoka han. All the same, the bakufu was clearly the supreme power to Bokushi beyond all these han authorities, and he did have the chance to meet with some of its agents, such as the shogun’s itinerant inspectors.
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

(junkenshi). The range of Bokushi’s contacts with domain and bakufu officials strongly indicates that within conservative limits, the social order had a certain fluidity and dynamism. Bokushi’s was not the relatively simple and uncontested class-based society that one might have imagined from consideration of the shi-no-kō-shō and baku-han systems alone. Everyday practice as examined in this thesis provides a crucial supplementary dimension.

Provincial family life is another area in which the thesis has illustrated the liveliness of Tokugawa society. Bokushi’s record, despite the limited period of time it covers, describes a great many events among his family and relatives. My examination of his marriages, divorces and other matters contributes to an understanding of commoners’ family life in the Tokugawa period. Details of Bokushi’s troubles with Kan’emon are particularly valuable, in view of the scarcity of premodern materials revealing conflict between parents and children, which defied Confucian ideology. Moreover, the Suzuki household’s changes in identity over the Tokugawa period from warrior to farmer, to small merchant, to wealthier landlord and sake-brewer, constitute good evidence of the fluidity of the business and social environment surrounding provincial families.

Finally, my examination of the whole process leading up to the publication of Hokuetsu seppu has highlighted the dynamism of the publishing industry in the late Tokugawa period. There is no doubt that the extant letters from Bakin and Kyōzan to Bokushi are highly significant for the first-hand information they provide about book-writing by popular authors for publication. The thesis has discussed both the general context in
which *Hokuetsu seppu* was published, and the concrete mechanisms that facilitated publication. My findings provide significant evidence of the maturity of Tokugawa-period popular culture, which had clearly begun to involve provincial people both as consumers and as producers. In relation to the issue of authorship of *Hokuetsu seppu*, I have argued that Bokushi and Kyōzan are best seen as co-authors, who played different roles in their joint project. The historical significance of *Hokuetsu seppu* is found precisely in the point that this work constitutes a joint production in the fullest sense, resulting from a very conscious and deliberate collaboration between rural and urban writers.

Overall, a consideration of Bokushi’s life adds much to an understanding of Tokugawa Japan. As a historical figure, he may not have taken part in the major decisions and actions that brought about the greatest political, economic, cultural and social changes of his day and subsequent periods. As a recorder of what was happening around him, however, he has few if any parallels. His life and work provide vivid evidence that connects the dramatic happenings at the centre of Tokugawa history with the lives of people throughout Japan. A consideration of Bokushi’s life brings into focus Tokugawa society as a whole, in all its complexity and contradiction.
### APPENDIX

**Rice Prices in Shiozawa, 1787-1853**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(A) Price of one  hyō (0.44 koku)* of rice in Shiozawa market</th>
<th>(B) Exchange rate of  zeni for one  ryō in Shiozawa</th>
<th>(C) Amount of rice for one  ryō based on (A) and (B) (one koku = 180.39 litres)</th>
<th>(D) Price of one  koku of rice in the unit of  ryō produced from (C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>1.17 – 1.29 koku</td>
<td>5,700 mon&lt;sup&gt;(A)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.775 – 0.854 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1.17 koku</td>
<td>1,180 mon</td>
<td>0.854 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1.23 koku</td>
<td>(5,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.813 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>2.30 koku</td>
<td>(5,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.435 ryō (?)&lt;sup&gt;(?)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>1.82 koku</td>
<td>(5,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.549 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>1.17 – 1.29 koku</td>
<td>6,000 mon&lt;sup&gt;(B)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.775 – 0.854 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1.27 – 1.33 koku</td>
<td>6,200 mon&lt;sup&gt;(B)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.752 – 0.787 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>1.27 koku</td>
<td>(6,200 mon?)</td>
<td>0.787 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1.33 koku</td>
<td>(6,200 mon?)</td>
<td>0.752 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>1.22 koku</td>
<td>(6,300 mon?)</td>
<td>0.820 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>1.40 koku</td>
<td>(6,300 mon?)</td>
<td>0.714 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>1.61 – 1.66 koku</td>
<td>6,400 mon&lt;sup&gt;(B)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.602 – 0.621 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>1.76 koku</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.568 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>1.29 koku</td>
<td>(6,600 mon?)</td>
<td>0.775 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>2.22 – 2.30 koku</td>
<td>6,800 mon&lt;sup&gt;(B)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.438 – 0.450 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>1.93 – 1.99 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.503 – 0.518 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>1.22 – 1.25 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.800 – 0.820 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>1.01 – 1.17 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.855 – 0.990 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>1.53 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.654 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>1.76 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.568 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>1.87 – 1.93 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.518 – 0.535 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>1.99 – 2.06 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.485 – 0.503 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>1.27 – 1.53 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.654 – 0.787 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>1.76 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.568 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>1.36 – 1.57 koku</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>0.637 – 0.735 ryō</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Value (ryō)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 750 mon to kin 1 bu 2 shu plus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>(6,800 mon?)</td>
<td>1.13 – 1.22 koku</td>
<td>0.820 – 0.885 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 100 mon in spring, kin 1 bu minus zeni 100 mon from the 7th month</td>
<td>6,900 mon (B)</td>
<td>1.66 – 1.87 koku</td>
<td>0.535 – 0.602 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu minus some</td>
<td>7,100 ~ 7,200 mon (B) to 6,700 mon (A)</td>
<td>about 1.76 koku</td>
<td>about 0.568 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu minus zeni 200–300 mon</td>
<td>6,800 ~ 6,400 mon (A)</td>
<td>1.99 – 2.17 koku</td>
<td>0.461 – 0.503 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu minus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>6,600 mon (B) to 6,000 mon (A)</td>
<td>1.89 – 2.38 koku</td>
<td>0.420 – 0.529 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 200 mon to kin 1 bu minus zeni 150 mon</td>
<td>6,100 ~ 6,400 mon (A)</td>
<td>1.56 – 1.95 koku</td>
<td>0.513 – 0.641 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu minus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>(6,200 mon?)</td>
<td>1.88 koku</td>
<td>0.532 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu</td>
<td>6,500 mon (B)</td>
<td>1.76 koku</td>
<td>0.568 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 200–500 mon</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>1.35 – 1.57 koku</td>
<td>0.637 – 0.741 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu to kin 1 bu plus zeni 800 mon</td>
<td>6,500 mon (B)</td>
<td>1.18 – 1.76 koku</td>
<td>0.568 – 0.847 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu to kin 1 bu plus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>6,400 ~ 6,600 mon (B)</td>
<td>1.66 – 1.76 koku</td>
<td>0.568 – 0.602 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 100 mon to kin 1 bu 2 shu minus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>6,500 ~ 6,600 mon (B)</td>
<td>1.22 – 1.66 koku</td>
<td>0.602 – 0.820 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu 2 shu plus zeni 100 mon</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>1.13 koku</td>
<td>0.885 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu 1 shu plus zeni 50 mon to kin 1 bu plus zeni 600–700 mon</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>1.23 – 1.37 koku</td>
<td>0.730 – 0.813 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu 2 shu plus zeni 300 mon to kin 2 bu 1 shu</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.78 – 1.04 koku</td>
<td>0.962 – 1.282 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu 3 shu plus zeni 150–300 mon</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.91 – 0.96 koku</td>
<td>1.042 – 1.099 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Kin 3 bu to kin 1 ryō 1 bu 2 shu</td>
<td>(6,500 mon?)</td>
<td>0.32 – 0.59 koku</td>
<td>1.695 – 3.125 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu minus zeni 250 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>2.05 koku</td>
<td>0.488 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 200–650 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>1.28 – 1.58 koku</td>
<td>0.633 – 0.781 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 400–500 mon to kin 2 bu minus zeni 50 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>0.89 – 1.43 koku</td>
<td>0.699 – 1.124 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Kin 2 bu plus zeni 300 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>0.81 koku</td>
<td>1.235 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu 2 shu to kin 1 bu 2 shu plus zeni 500 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>0.99 – 1.17 koku</td>
<td>0.855 – 1.010 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Kin 1 bu plus zeni 500 mon</td>
<td>(7,000 mon?)</td>
<td>1.37 koku</td>
<td>0.730 ryō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Data from</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>Column A: Data from 1787 to 1788 Compiled from ‘Eisei kirokushū’, in Miya Eiji, Inoue Keiryū and Takahashi Minoru (comps), <em>Suzuki Bokushi zenshū</em>, vol. 2 (Chūō kōronsha, 1983), pp. 22-23.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>Data from 1790 to 1828 Compiled from ‘Eitai kōshinchō’, in <em>Suzuki Bokushi zenshū</em>, vol. 2, pp. 105-06, 109, 113, 117-18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A N/A</td>
<td>Data from 1830 to 1853 Compiled from ‘Edayoshimura no kōshinkō-chō kiroku’, in Shiozawamachi (ed.), <em>Shiozawachō-shi shiryōhen</em>, vol. 2 (Shiozawa, Niigata: Shiozawamachi, 2000), pp. 327-30.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns B: Italicised data with a question mark in parentheses My conjecture based on the above data.

---

*The capacity of one hyō varied slightly from place to place. The figure in Shiozawa, 0.44 koku, seems higher than the normal amount (0.4 – 0.42 koku). The units of currency in the Tokugawa period were as follows:

- **kin (gold):** 1 ryō = 4 bu = 16 shu
- **gin (silver):** 1 kan = 1,000 monme
- **zeni:** 1 kan = 1,000 mon
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Place of publication is Tokyo unless otherwise noted.

Materials produced or collected by Suzuki Bokushi


Unpublished Materials

‘Hokuetsu seppu no hakkō busū’, email reply from Iwanami shoten, Tokyo. 7 September 2005.
Crossing Boundaries: Suzuki Bokushi and the Rural Elite of Tokugawa Japan

‘Imanari-shi keizu’, manuscript held in the Imanari family, Minami Uonuma, Niigata.


Local Histories and Published Document Collections


**Other Primary Materials**


Dictionaries and Directories


**Other Secondary Sources**


Aoki Michio. ‘Chūbu ishiki no mebae to yukigunikan no seiritsu.’ In Aoki Michio, ed., *Higashi to nishi, Edo to kamigata*, vol. 17 of *Nihon no kinsei*. Chūō kōronsha, 1994, pp. 341-78.


Asao Naohiro. ‘Kinsei no mibun to sono hen’yō.’ In Asao Naohiro, ed., *Mibun to kakushiki*, vol. 7 of *Nihon no kinsei*. Chūō kōronsha, 1992, pp. 7-40.

Asao Naohiro. ‘Kinsei no mibun to sono hen’yō.’ In Asao Naohiro, ed., *Mibun to kakushiki*, vol. 7 of *Nihon no kinsei*. Chūō kōronsha, 1992, pp. 7-40.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


---------.


Fujitani Toshio. ‘Okagemairi’ to ‘eejanaika’. Iwanami shoten, 1968.


Gluck, Carol. ‘Sengo shigaku no meta hisutori.’ In Rekishi ishiki no genzai, bekkantō vol. 1 of Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi. Iwanami shoten, 1995, pp. 3-43.


---------. Edo nōmin no kurashi to jinsei. Reitaku daigaku shuppankai, 2002.


---------. Kinsei nōmin to ie, mura, kokka. Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1996.


423
Bibliography


---------. ‘Jūhasseiki murayakunin no kōdō to “chūkan”-teki ishiki.’ In Hirakawa Arata and Taniyama Masamichi, eds, *Chiki shakai to...*


Takada Hiroshi. ‘Sekaiichi nagai yuigon o kaita otoko no urami no jinsei.’ *Shinchō 45+* (June 1985): 70-81.


Bibliography


